

THE TRAMPING METHODIST

BY
SHEILA KAYE-SMITH

Bed in the bush with stars to see,
Bread I dip in the river—
There's the life for a man like me,
There's the life for ever.
R. L. STEVENSON.



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THE TRAMPING METHODIST

CHAPTER I

OF THE METHODIST AT BREDE PARSONAGE

My father was Rector of Brede, and held in plurality the livings of Udimore, Westfield, Piddinghoe, and Southease. He himself took charge of the first three parishes, which lay near each other, and my elder brother, Clonmel, assisted him as his curate. Between Piddinghoe and Southease an underfed, overworked curate-in-charge galloped an underfed, overworked horse every Sunday.

My father's office was almost a sinecure—there were only two services a week at Brede, and only one at Udimore and at Westfield. On Sunday evening my father took off the priest with his surplice, and lived the life of a fox-hunting squire till he put on his surplice again the next Sunday morning. Clonmel was not a priest even in his surplice, but from week-end to week-end, a combination of the jockey, the sot, and the brute.

We were a large family—my father and mother, my brothers Clonmel, Archie, and Christopher, and my sisters Fanny and Matilda. I have it on the

authority of several neighbours that the Lytes of Brede Parsonage were renowned for their good looks, my father and Clonmel being specially fine men. As for me, I think I can do no better than describe myself in the words of my mother when a visitor admired my face : " Yes, Humphrey would be handsome if his brows were not so black, and if he were not always frowning."

I can clearly remember that frown, though time and peace have long since worn away all traces of it, except two upright lines between my brows. I first noticed it when, as a child of six, I caught sight of myself in a mirror and saw the sullen, swarthy little face, with its beetling brows and angry grey eyes beneath them. I then realised how I deserved the epithets constantly hurled at me by my parents and Clonmel of " Little beast ! Little devil !"

I was an unfavourable specimen of childhood—stiff, moody, sullen, and untractable, my bosom always seething with furious passions. I had no affection for my family, as I knew they did not love me or take any interest in me. Archie and Kit were coarse and rough, Fanny and Tilly were vain and would-be-genteel ; my mother neglected me, and my father and Clonmel kicked and beat me. So I shunned them all, and would mope by myself about the house, sitting for hours, my head sunk on my breast, in the recess of some window-seat, or on the attic stairs, where, as they were rickety and unsafe with age, I was sure of comparative peace.

My life was miserable, and my heart was full of

bitter passions ; but one day a kind of happiness dawned for me. My brothers and sisters and I were gathering blackberries in a field near Starvecrow, when the sun suddenly pierced his noontide wrapping of clouds, and shed his beams on the pastures. Then I noticed for the first time how lovely was the country round my home. I saw the Brede River winding through emerald marshes, like a string of turquoise on a woman's green gown. I saw Spell Land Woods with their foliage gilt right royally, and the glorious scarlet of the roofs of Dew Farm against a background of bice and blue. I felt as if I had been blind up to that hour, and had only just opened my eyes on a world which God saw was very good.

Thenceforth I was an ardent lover of Nature, a mistress who never grows old. I rose early each day that I might see the mists scuttle from the valleys like ghosts at cock-crow, and the sunrise pierce the woods with copper darts. I never went to bed till the fold-star had risen beyond Udimore, and the owls had begun to hoot in the woods of Brede Eye. I used to take long rambles in the lanes and fields, and one night I spent on the lee-side of a haystack by the Rother Marshes. I saw the Zodiac wheel slowly above the horizon, the scales hang over the Five-watering, and the Virgin stand as close as she dare to the flushing moon. I saw the mists creep along the grass and along the breast of the river, writhe between the pollards, and scud like ghosts over the level. I was severely beaten for my escapade when

I returned home, but the memory of that night shall go down with me to the grave.

It was well for me that I had this love of field and hedgerow, for my life was empty of all other loves. I hated books, and never opened one of my freewill, though by dint of much whipping I had been taught my letters. My younger brothers and I did not go to school, as we were needed for work on the Parsonage Farm, and our education was confined to three hours' daily reading with our father. I hated this, and, regardless of blows, played truant at every opportunity. It was after one of these revolts that the turning-point of my life was reached.

I had been wandering in Loneham fields, instead of plodding through Ovid in my father's study, and on my return was thrashed by Clonmel, and locked into an attic with the assurance that I should stay there on bread and water till the end of the week. At first I was delirious with rage, and lying on the dirty floor, I sobbed wildly and tearlessly, till I fell asleep through exhaustion. When I awoke I felt calmer, and began to examine my prison. It was bare of all furniture, save for an old chest, and on opening this I found a quantity of musty books. These were no consolation to me, and I shut the lid. But as the hours wore on, loneliness and fear overpowered me. I had always been a superstitious child, and even in the room where I slept with Archie and Kit, I had often lain awake trembling in the clutches of the terror by night. This attic soon became a hell to me. I thought to see ghosts and

fetches slithering in the moonbeams up the wall, and the dark corners seemed full of spooks. I thought to hear my name called from the garden, but on looking out, saw nothing but the ghastly moonlight fluttering in the trees. My face and the palms of my hands were damp with sweat, and in sheer desperation I opened the book-chest, and took out a volume to distract my thoughts.

At first I did not understand half I read by the clear white light of the moon ; I realised only that the book was a holy book, and spoke of God and heaven. But soon a sentence arrested me and made me consider, simply because it was so unlike anything I had read before. I had only the vaguest religious ideas—I had been told that there was a God above, Who would certainly thrust me into hell if I continued passionate and unruly. I had also been told that Brede church was God's house, which did not increase my reverence for my Maker, as the church was dirty and hideous, with walls discoloured by damp and filth, and all view of the altar-table shut out by a huge, unsightly three-decker. But in this book I found God as the God of love. "My son, I am the Lord," I read, "a stronghold in the day of trouble. Come thou unto Me when it is not well with thee."

I paused. The words were sweet. How often and how bitterly had I longed for a comforter ! My heart was touched, and my tears splashed on the open page. I read on—"I will come and take care of thee." "Let not therefore thine heart be

troubled, neither let it be afraid. Trust in Me and put confidence in My mercy."

I read the Imitation of Christ till the sky suddenly flushed with a throbbing flame of light, and the birds sent up a matins through the roar of the wind. Then I put it aside, and lay down and slept on the floor till the sun awoke me. The whole of that day I spent in pouring over my new-found treasure. I forgot that I was terrified, miserable, and hungry ; I lived only in the sweet words of the Brother of Common Life. The effects they produced in me were extraordinary. I think that Mr. Wesley would have been glad to know my case—it would have strengthened his theory of instantaneous conversion. I entered that attic passionate, desperate, my heart full of hate and fury. I left it calmed and humbled, with a steadfast resolution to lead a Christian life.

It was very hard—it is always so, and it was exceptionally difficult in my case. I had no loving parents or friends to help me and pray for me. On the contrary, my efforts after holiness often brought on me the ridicule of my family, who could neither understand nor sympathise. Still, I fought on. I fell daily, hourly, but I rose again and struggled forward, learning as much from my failures as from my triumphs.

At first my efforts were directed towards what I called "being good"—that is to say, answering meekly when I was spoken to roughly, obeying even the surliest commands, and banishing all thoughts of rage or unbrotlierliness from my heart. But after a

while my views widened. I had finished the first three books of Thomas à Kempis, and had begun the fourth—"Concerning the Sacrament." This inflamed me with fresh desires, and my whole being yearned for the Communion. I was sufficiently acquainted with the Prayer Book to know that I could not receive the Lord's Supper without Confirmation, and after some thought I approached my father on the subject, and asked if I might be confirmed.

At first he received the idea with derision, but, remembering that I was fifteen years old and a clergyman's son, granted me my wish. So I was handed over to Clonmel, who kicked and caned my Catechism into me, and one September afternoon my brother and I rode off to Hastings, where the Bishop was about to hold a Confirmation.

It was a still day, and the clouds were dun, but every now and then a gleam of sunlight swept over the fields, faint as the smile of a dying child. Clonmel took no notice of me, as he was sulky at having missed a day's cub-hunting, but rode on in front, his Rehoboam very much on the back of his head, and dismounted for a tankard of beer at every tavern we passed.

We went through Westfield and Ore, and I saw the sea and the cliffs and the little red-roofed town, with the church of All Saints looking down on it from the slope of the East Hill. There are two churches in Hastings, S. Clement's and All Saints', and the Confirmation was to be held in the latter. So Clonmel

and I rode down All Saints' Street, and engaged quarters for the night at the New Moon. After a goodly potation of rum-shrub, my brother marched me off to the church, where I took my place in a front seat, while he lounged in a pew at the back.

All Saints', Hastings, was not unlike S. George's, Brede, in point of ugliness. But it was cleaner; there was some beautiful tracery in the windows, and the faded remains of a fresco representing the Resurrection were still visible over the chancel arch. The Confirmation candidates sat in the front of the church, the boys on one side, the girls on the other. The latter were devout enough, and read their Prayer Books till the service began; but the former, who were miserably few, spent their time in whispering, giggling, and ogling the less serious of the girls. I found it practically impossible to pray collectedly, especially as my comrades were laughing at me for remaining so long on my knees. I stuffed my fingers into my ears, and uttered a few disjointed supplications. Then a tear, born of hopelessness, fell on my Prayer Book. I flushed, bit my lips angrily, and rose from my knees to see that the Bishop and the Vicar had just arrived.

Bishop Ashburnham was a fatherly little man, but did not seem much impressed with ideas of reverence. Still, he had some notion of feeding his flock, and before the actual rite of Confirmation, spoke a few words to the candidates. He had a pleasant voice, and his address was practical, if not very spiritual. He told us to obey our parents and pastors, to keep

the 'commandments, honour the King, and say our prayers. He also bade us come frequently to the Communion, though this was a mockery to most of us, who had only three celebrations a year in our parish churches.

As the service continued I began to feel less miserable and hopeless, and when it came to the laying on of hands, peace and devotion had revisited my heart. I went up the aisle like one in a trance, and knelt enraptured with the thin white hands upon my head, while pastoral lips begged the Lord to defend this His child with His heavenly grace.

I returned to my seat, my heart beating feverishly with love and hope. I remember nothing of the rest of the service; I seemed to have soared in vision above that ugly church and slovenly congregation, and to have visited the house not made with hands, and the general assembly and church of the first-born. I was cruelly aroused by my companions pushing past me into the aisle at the end of the service, and rising from my knees I went to where Clonmel was waiting for me at the back of the church.

"What the devil is the matter with you?" exclaimed my brother, when we had passed through the churchyard, and stood in All Saints' Street.

"What are you starin' at the sky for, as if you saw spirits, like a damnation Methodist?"

"I am very sorry, Clonmel——"

"Don't answer me like that, you little beast! I won't stand your cant. Hurry on to the New

Moon and order me a quart of ale. Make haste, I tell you, or I'll break every bone in your body."

I obeyed him hurriedly, and a few minutes later we were seated at our supper in the coffee-room, Clonmel slowly drowning his ill-humour in his tankard of bitter ale. He seemed to have plenty of friends in Hastings, judging by the number of greetings he exchanged with the other occupants of the room. Our table was soon surrounded by horse-breakers and jockeys in different stages of intoxication, with whom my brother bandied oaths and jests that set me blushing to the roots of my hair. The Reverend Clonmel noticed this, and boxed my ears in his usual brotherly fashion, telling the company that I had just been confirmed, and was already half a Ranter, though, by the hell! he'd flog it out of me before long.

I gulped down my supper and stole out of the room. I was tired, and decided to go to bed. The little bed-chamber under the eaves of the old inn was very peaceful after that uproarious coffee-room. I knelt by the window and prayed, while the starlight came down through the space and years, and kissed my shoulders and bent head.

I lay awake a long time listening to the wind as it howled up the street, and thinking over the events of the day. My misery and my happiness balanced each other pretty equally. I was miserable because I was so lonely and unloved; I was happy because I possessed a treasure which God had given, and the world could not take away.

The hours went by, and the noise in the coffee-room increased. Roars of laughter came to me where I lay, with fragments of song, and every now and then an unlovely woman's voice. At last a door flew open, and the shouts and oaths sounded more clearly. The merry company were reeling upstairs. I heard my brother approach my door. Clonmel drunk was worse than Clonmel sober. I lay motionless in a sweat of terror with the clothes over my head. But he took no notice of me, flung himself all dressed on the bed, and was soon asleep, breathing heavily. A few minutes later I fell asleep myself, and thus ended my Confirmation day.

I woke early, and the morning twilight was in the room. I rose noiselessly, dressed, and stole downstairs, and drawing back the bolts of the inn door, went into the street. The little houses were asleep, and my steps rang hollow on the deserted pavement. At a bend of the road, I saw the sea. The water was a soft pearl-grey, the same colour as the sky. Indigo shadows lay here and there on its breast, and from the light into the shadow, from the grey into the indigo, the brown-sailed fishing-smacks glided. The wind came rustling and moaning up the street, and suddenly a blood-red scar appeared in the clouds above the East Hill. I heard a robin sing, and my heart leapt in my breast with peace new-born, and hope revived.

When I reached the inn I found Clonmel and my breakfast awaiting me, for we were to go home early, my brother being anxious to ride with the hounds.

CHAPTER II

OF THE METHODIST AT SHOYSWELL

As soon as we had reached home, Clonmel set off for Doleham, where he hoped to fall in with the hunt. I went into the back parlour, where I hoped to be alone. I found my mother seated at the window trifling with some fancy work. She looked surprised to see me.

"I had no idea you would be back so soon. Your father thought that you and your brother would spend the day in Hastings, so he has hired a man from Doucegrove Farm to help Kit and Archie with the ricks."

"Clonmel has gone a-hunting. Mother," I added suddenly, "when will there be a Sacrament at Brede?"

"A Sacrament!" cried my mother, knitting her brows.

"Yes, ma'am. The Bishop said——"

"Oh, you have been confirmed—I had forgotten it. That accounts perhaps for your extraordinary way of speaking. There will be a Sacrament at Christmas, not a day before."

"That's a long time!"

"Well, how often would your reverence have a Sacrament, may I ask?"

"Once a week."

"You little fool! You don't know what you're saying. Why, the Methodists have a Sacrament once a week!"

"But may we not do as the Methodists do?"

"As the Methodists do! The boy's mad. I've a good mind to tell your father, and, la! wouldn't he beat you! But I shan't tell him," she added more kindly, "for you're only a silly child. Go away now, and learn to keep your opinions to yourself in future."

I left the room and went into the garden. The sun was shining, but the world seemed very grey to the boy who stood with his hands pressed tightly to his bosom, trying vainly to keep down the sobs that swelled it. I do not think that I had ever felt so miserable and desolate. But my despair did not last long, for the thought came to me that though there was not to be a Sacrament in my father's church till Christmas, other parsons might do their duty better. Hastings, Iden, Rye, Sedlescombe, I knew to be in the same plight as Brede, but there were hamlets beyond—Bodiam, Salehurst, Ticehurst, and many others—where I should perhaps find what I yearned for. My time was my own that afternoon, as a man had been hired from Doucegrove to do my work. I could not be happier than in wandering from village to village searching for a temple where I

might offer my sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

The sunbeams flickered in the leafage of the orchard; the wind swept singing over the fields from Lankhurst and dried the foolish tears upon my face. I went into the house, pocketed a hunk of bread and cheese, and thus equipped started on my voyage of discovery.

I walked quickly up the Cackle Street, and came to Broad Oak, where I left the road and crossed the fields to the hop-gardens of Udiam. It was the hopping season, and I passed many a band of hop-pickers, and many an oast with the smoke of the drying furnaces streaming through the cowl. The scent of the vines was delicious, and I sat in their moving shade, ate my bread and cheese, and felt almost happy in the quiet and sunshine.

After I had eaten I stretched myself on the sweet-smelling ground, and slept and dreamed of moaning water and church bells ringing at dawn. When I woke, the sun was at his highest. I rose refreshed, and walked on to Salehurst, my heart bounding to see the world so fair. I forgot that the swallows were flown, that the purple loosestrife had faded from the banks of the meadow stream, and that the scarlet on the leaves I thought so beautiful was like the glow on consumption's cheek, a herald of death and decay.

But my spirits were soon dashed at the sight of the locked doors of S. Mary's, Salehurst, and of the notice which told me that though morning and evening prayers were read there alternately every Sunday,

the Lord's Supper was not administered except at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide. It was the same at Bodiam, and before I had come to Hurst Green I was deaf and blind to the beautiful world, and saw only the bare stubble-fields drenched in the tears of the dying summer.

At Hurst Green there was no church, and I set out wearily for Ticehurst. I had now come some fourteen miles from my home, but this would be no obstacle to me were I so fortunate as to find a Sacrament at Ticehurst, for in those days celebrations after Morning Prayer were the accepted rule. Still, the sun was westering, and I knew that I should be punished if I reached home after dark ; and as at Ticehurst I was again doomed to disappointment, I started Bredewards with a heavy heart.

The sun was setting fast, and hung low in the sky above Witherenden—a scarlet wafer on the brink of a cloudy chalice into which it was rapidly sinking. I quickened my pace, for I realised that I ran the risk not only of arriving home after dark, but of being locked out for the night. Seeing a lane lead southward through the fields, I turned down it, thinking that it might shorten my road. But this reckless course brought me punishment. The lane merged into a track, and the track gradually faded away and left me on the banks of a stream, with never a bridge to cross by.

I sighed hopelessly, and wandered a little by the stream side. The waters flowed with a moaning sound, and the crimson of the sky was mirrored in

them, with the first star hanging on the edge of the glow.

At last I came to a bend where weeping willows kissed the bubbles at their feet, and where the stream looked narrow enough for me to jump it. But I had miscalculated my distance, and this the icy water round my thighs and breast soon told me. With great difficulty I scrambled out at the further side and stood shivering on the bank. That moment the sun went down and the night wind rustled the grass.

I was by this time almost sure that I could not reach Brede much before midnight, when the Parsonage door would be locked. Moreover, I had lost my way, I was dripping wet, and faint with hunger and weariness. I dragged myself across the field, and came into a road. In front of me a lane led southwards, but I would not have turned down it—remembering my former recklessness and its results—had I not seen a light twinkling at the end. I knew that I was near a house, and resolved to go there and ask my way.

The lane was rough and muddy, and the arching trees shadowed it from the dusk as with a pall. I groped my way along the hedge, and suddenly came out of the darkness to find myself in front of an old house with oasts and haggards swarming round it. The farmhouse was half-timbered, and roses, passion-vine, and creeper did their best to hide the cracks and gaps in the walls, and to cover the wounds in the old roof, wreathing tenderly about the tottering chimney-

stacks, and hanging in festoons from gable-end and eaves.

A light beamed from one of the lower windows, and, passing by, I saw an oak-ribbed kitchen with a table in the middle, at which three persons were seated. I knocked at the door, and the next moment it was opened by a short, thickset man, with kind eyes and curly grey hair. He looked sharply at my wet clothes, and when I asked him the way to Brede, exclaimed :

"You're not going there to-night, surely !"

"I am indeed—is it far off ?"

"If you walked hard from this minute, you couldn't reach it before dawn—and you're soaking wet, my lad. Where have you been ?"

I told him that I had fallen into a stream, and he shook his head.

"You can't walk far in this plight ; you're shivering with cold. Come in to the fire, and dry your clothes."

"You are very kind, but indeed I must not loiter. I—I shall get into trouble if I am not home to-night."

"I told you just now that you can't possibly be home before dawn, so come in, my lad. I won't have you leave my door shivering in this way !"

He took me by the arm, and led me into the kitchen. It was a quaint room, and smelled sweet, for great bunches of lavender were hung from the middle beam, and an apple stuck full of cloves stood on the chimney-piece. A man and a girl sat at the

table. The man was a tall, thin young fellow, raggedly dressed, but with one of the sweetest faces I have ever seen in my own sex. The droop of his mouth was sad, but his eyes were full of happiness and of a light that was almost divine. He had been talking earnestly to the girl, and his wan cheeks were flushed, as he quoted from the Bible before him : " The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up," were the words I remember he said.

The girl was of about my own age and dressed in pigeon grey, her hair hanging in a long, thick plait between her shoulders. She was not beautiful, but her eyes were glowing like the sparks which fly from under the smith's hammer, and her cheeks were flushing like the heart of a fire.

They both rose as I came in, and showed no surprise when the grey-haired man told them of my plight, but bade me sit by the fire and dry myself. I drew close to the blaze, and the three took their seats once more at the table, while the ragged saint resumed his reading. Every now and then he paused and spoke a few words to his listeners, and he spoke as I had heard no man speak. His words were rough and ill-chosen, and he gave me the impression of a man who, though educated himself, had mixed so long with the rude and uncultured people as to have assimilated some of their manners and speech. He spoke with force, even brutality, and there was a Biblical ring in his sentences that told of a deep familiarity with the Book before him. His speech seemed too great for his frail body; the

thundering words and rolling phrases matched ill with the thin hands and haggard face. What struck me most about his oration was the way he went to Nature for his similes. He had not been speaking for ten minutes before I knew that he could tell the name of every star that trembled on the dun breast of the sky, and of every flower that coloured the grass ; that he knew the roosting-places of the birds and the variations of their notes ; that he regarded as familiar friends the wild timid creatures of the forest, the conies of the fallow, and the butterflies of the hedge and clover-field.

He stopped speaking suddenly, and closed his book. At the same moment a woman came in with three bowls of porridge, but at a word from her master went away for a fourth, of which I was right glad, as I had tasted nothing since noon.

"You shall spend the night here," said the grey-haired man, sitting down beside me on the settle. "You're much too tired to walk further to-night. Besides, you would lose your way in the dark."

"I dare not——"

"Nonsense, my lad ! I insist. Your parents wouldn't have you walk through the dark and cold. No,"—and he laid his hand on my mouth—"I'll hear no more excuses. You shan't open your lips—except to eat your porridge."

"The night is very sweet," said the girl, who had risen and was standing by the fire. "Father, I shall take my supper to the gable-barn and eat it there. Will you not come too ?" she added, turning to me.

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"Nonsense, my lad ! I insist. Your parents wouldn't have you walk through the dark and cold. No,"—and he laid his hand on my mouth—"I'll hear no more excuses. You shan't open your lips—except to eat your porridge."

"The night is very sweet," said the girl, who had risen and was standing by the fire. "Father, I shall take my supper to the gable-barn and eat it there. Will you not come too ?" she added, turning to me.

Her tone was so frank, so modest, and so sweet that I had neither the will nor the power to refuse. My clothes were by this time dry enough to suit me, for I had been hardily bred, so we left the kitchen and crossed the fold to a barn with tarred wooden walls. The inside was full of hay, which we climbed by a ladder set against it, and found ourselves in a sweet-smelling loft, from which we looked down through a huge window into the fold.

"You have not told me your name," said the girl, when we were seated.

"My name is Humphrey Lyte ; what is yours ?"

"Mary Winde !"

"What a lovely name !"

"Do you think so ? There are so many girls round here called Mary."

"I think it is the most beautiful name a woman can have."

She looked meditative, and cast down her eyes to the hay.

"Does your father own this farm ?" I asked her.

"Yes. He used to be a preacher, but his health broke down, so we came to live here at Shoyswell."

"Who is that gentleman with your father ? He looks like a preacher, too !"

"That is Mr. John Palehouse, and he goes from village to village preaching."

"You are Methodists !" I cried, suddenly alarmed.

"Yes ! Does that shock you very much ?"

"No—er—no—that is to say——"

She laughed merrily.

"I am sure by your voice that you are very much shocked indeed."

"My father is a clergyman," I stammered, "and I know that he will be furious when he hears that I have spent the night with Methodists. But after all, he is sure to beat me for not being home by dark, and he cannot beat me harder than he does usually—that is to say," I added, "without killing me."

"You speak as if you would not mind being killed."

"I don't suppose being killed hurts much," I said dreamily; "at least, not more than being alive."

"How wildly you talk!" she cried, drawing away from me. "Life is wonderful and beautiful—at least to me."

"It is," I said, "at least to you."

"There are the fields, the woods, the stars, and the wind," she continued, "and there are books. Don't you love books?"

"I hate them!"

"What a strange boy you are! How do you spend the long evenings if you hate books?"

"I think!"

"And sad thoughts, I'll be bound. Do you know that there are such fierce, frowning lines between your eyebrows? They were the first thing I noticed when I saw you."

"Have you many books?" I asked abruptly.

"Not many of my own, but my father allows me to read what I like of his."

"Tell me about your books," I cried, leaning

forward in the hay, and touching her hand. "I love to hear you speak. I never had a play-fellow."

"I know nothing of foreign languages, so I can read only English books. But I love them so much that I never wish for any others. Shakespeare, Chaucer, Pope, Milton, and Spenser—I will lend you my Spenser if you like?"

"Thank you! I promise to read it, and it will be the only book, except my Bible and 'Imitation,' that I have ever read of my free will."

She went on speaking, and I lay listening in the hay. We had finished our porridge, and had set our bowls aside. The night wind blew in on us, and rustled the hay. The stillness was broken by the bleating of sheep, which gradually drew nearer. The fold-gates opened, and the flock poured in, their whiteness tinged to grey in the starlight. All was so dim that sheep from sheep could hardly be distinguished, and an indefinite mass surged between the oasts.

It was like a beautiful dream, which we cry for when we wake. The stars shone mistily, like pearls under a woman's scarf, and farm-lights dotted the country, as if the fields reflected and magnified the stars. A little moon hung between the gables of Shoyswell, and when her light fell full upon the hay, Mary stopped speaking and laughed.

"I have preached of books enough for to-night. Hark! the fold-bells are ringing us to bed."

We climbed down from our nest and made our way

through the sheep to the house, Mary going in front of me—grey gown 'mid grey sheep in a grey starlight.

Entering the kitchen, we surprised Mr. Winde and John Palehouse in a dispute as to which room I should sleep in, each declaring that I must have his own. Finding that accommodation at Shoyswell was so scant, I refused both offers, vowing, as was, indeed, the truth, that I would rather lie on a truss of hay in one of the outhouses. By dint of argument and entreaty I at length carried my point, and after we had all knelt for a few minutes in prayer on the warm flags round the hearth, Peter Winde lighted me to my sleeping-place.

It was an old barn and immensely high ; but it was warm and sweet-scented. The moon and stars shone on me where I lay, too happy to go to sleep. I had always loved solitude and longed to sleep alone, but my wish had never been granted me—except for the night spent under the haystack on the Rother Marshes—till now, when I lay in the old black barn, and outside the wind crooned hush-a-bye to the oaks and hazels, and all else was silence save for the groaning crows of the oasts.

I did not sleep till the morning dusk, and it seemed as if I had only just closed my eyes when I woke to find John Palehouse shaking me by the shoulder. Breakfast was laid in the kitchen, and when it was over, Mary took me into the next room, where the walls were lined with books. She gave me a Spenser from her own little store, and I was delighted, because I knew that I should have to walk over to Shoyswell

to return it. On our way out of the room I noticed a number of black-bound volumes in a case by themselves.

"Are those your father's?" I asked, impressed by their size.

"Yes," she said, and added mischievously, "they are Methodist books."

I drew back a little.

"But, after all, if you and Mr. Winde are Methodists, they cannot be such dreadful people as I have been told."

"I wouldn't be too sure of that," cried Mary, laughing. "I am so sorry you must go," she added gravely.

"You are not so sorry as I am. I have been happier these few hours than I have ever been before."

"Poor boy!" I thought I heard her whisper, and I know that there were tears in her eyes as she said good-bye.

CHAPTER III

OF THE METHODIST'S CONFESSION OF FAITH

I WAS not long in reading Mary's Spenser, and when I had returned it she lent me her Shakespeare, and after that her Chaucer. This meant many a walk to Shoyswell, and each visit was sweeter than the last. I found that if I rose very early, I could easily be back by nightfall, and as I was often wont to take long rambles by myself, my family asked no questions. I was much hindered by my duties on the farm, but I enjoyed an occasional holiday, and no one cared to know how I spent it. On my return from my first visit to the Windes I had told my father that, being overtaken by night, I had sought shelter at a farm-house ; and as this afforded enough excuse for beating me, no more questions were asked, and the Reverend Septimus Lyte never heard that his son was the guest and friend of Methodists.

John Palehouse had gone on a preaching expedition to Devonshire, and Peter and Mary were alone. They always had a quiet but kindly welcome for me, and my heart began to warm and expand in its new happiness. For this was the only friendship I had

known. Though my father and mother occasionally visited or were visited by the neighbouring "gentry," I had never had any other companions than my younger brothers, who were companions only in the sense that we worked, ate, and slept together, and could by no means be called my friends.

My intercourse with the Windes was new and beautiful. Mary and I used to take our books into the hay-loft and read aloud to each other, bringing what we could not understand to Peter; and in the evening the father and daughter walked part of the way home with me, as far as Lossenham, perhaps, or Methersham, on the great lonely marsh where the mists were brooding and hanging like streamers on the branches of the willows, where the Rother wound like a ribbon of flame towards the east. Peter would bless me when we said good-bye, and I would walk on to Brede with a light heart, and would dream of Shoyswell.

A great happiness had come into my life with these two friends, but I still had my moments of darkness and depression. These increased as I grew older and my eyes opened wider on the sorrows round me. I soon realised that not only was the Sacrament neglected, but that the Gospel was not preached. The poor people of my father's parish were woefully ignorant—many of them could neither read nor write—and could hear of God and heaven only from my father and Clonmel, who cared for none of these things. Those wretched folk lived hopeless, religionless lives, and spent them in bestial pleasures, sin,

suffering, and despair. My heart yearned after them—they were like shepherdless sheep on the hills. I resolved to try to better their lot. I secretly visited the old people in their cottages, and I formed a class of lads, whom I taught to read in a kitchen lent me by a cottager of Broad Oak, having only one rule—that each lad I taught should in his turn teach a friend. But my father heard of my undertaking, and if there was one thing he hated, it was to see another do the good works he left undone. He scattered my class, flogged me, and multiplied my duties on the Parsonage Farm, hoping by hard work and hard blows to “knock all the nonsense out of me.”

This made me desperate, and I did that which I had been tempted to do some months before, but had not dared. On one of my visits to Shoyswell—they were very few now that my farm-work had been increased—I asked Peter Winde to lend me one of his Methodist books. He had made me a laughing offer once, but I had drawn back horrified, and he looked surprised when I ventured my request.

“Do you really mean it, lad?”

“Yes, I really mean it.”

He shook his head, but gave me a volume. It was the smallest of his collection, and during the day I kept it in my bosom, and at night it lay under my pillow. I was in dread of discovery, and read it in secrecy and fear, but when I had finished it I asked Peter for another.

It was sheer desperation that had driven me to this course, and sometimes I paused and wondered at

myself, and at the direction matters were taking. It seemed impossible that Humphrey Lyte, the loyal Churchman and devout Sacramentalist, should be reading Methodist books, and becoming each day more favourably disposed towards Methodism. The fact was that my books, and the beautiful lives led by Peter and Mary Winde, had taught me that Methodists were not the evil fanatics and heretics my family believed them. They were truer to Church discipline and to the Sacraments than were most Church people and clergy, and they had a zeal for the Gospel of Christ that made my heart glow with fervour and admiration. With the Calvinistic Methodists, the followers of Whitefield, I had no sympathy, but the disciples of Wesley, with their simple austere lives, their good works, and their enthusiasm, stirred up my highest respect, and respect soon deepened into a wish to imitate.

At first I proposed to go no further than imitation. I fasted and spent much time in prayer and in reading the Bible. I hoped that the Church might be goaded to reform by the example of the noble lives outside her pale. But I soon saw how foundationless was this hope, and began to entertain doubts as to my right to remain in a Church which had fallen so far from her purest ideals.

I angrily silenced my doubts, but they were stronger than I, and tormented me, especially after my failure with my school. I saw that it would be impossible for me to do good in my father's parish. I saw also that no parish in England would tolerate

my good works. The Church hated enthusiasm; she preached against it and fought against it. There was no room for the zealous preacher of the Gospel in the Church.

I have told in a few lines of a struggle which raged several months. I shall not enter into the details of that conflict, or describe how my doubts gradually formed themselves into unanswerable arguments and then into convictions. I was about twenty years old when my eyes opened fully on the truth, and I remember my despair when I saw that there was only one course open to me—a secession from the Established Church to the Methodists.

I lay awake night after night in anguish. I said nothing of my trouble to Peter Winde, and he gave me no sign that he suspected it. He had seldom spoken to me of his beliefs, but his life had preached them more convincingly than his lips could ever have done. At last, however, he let me see that he knew of my difficulties. I had managed to find time for a visit to Shoyswell. Mary was out, but Peter received me kindly. He was dusting the shelves of his library, and asked me to amuse myself with a book till he had finished. I remember little of the book—it was “Purchas his Pilgrimage,” I think—for I fell a-dreaming over the open page, and was roused only by Winde putting something down in front of me. It was an open Bible, and one verse was deeply scored—

“He that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me.”

"I'll walk as far as Reedbed with you this evening, lad," said Peter.

Mary came home from the neighbouring farmhouse of Turzes, where she had been visiting some friends, and we had dinner. When it was over, Peter and I set out for Brede. I said good-bye to Mary at the gate.

"You are not coming with us?" I said.

"No, not this afternoon!"

"Why not? I should like to talk with you about 'Paradise Regained.'"

"But my father wishes to talk with you about something far more important."

Her voice rang serious, and there was a great glow in her eyes and on her cheeks.

"God bless you, Humphrey," and she shut the gate.

I hurried after her father, who was half way up Shoyswell lane, and we walked on side by side for some time in silence. It was not till we had reached the Rother Levels that he spoke. The March afternoon was drawing to a close, and the country lay round me draped in vespers robes of crimson and grey—crimson on the great sedge-bordered ponds and on the breast of the Rother, grey on the misty fields that huddled, with woods still darker grey, towards the south.

"Well, lad," said Peter, "and will you deny your Lord that He may deny you, or will you confess Him that He may confess you before the angels of Heaven?"

"What do you mean?" I faltered.

"I mean that you must speak—you can't keep silence any longer."

"How do you know what I've got to say?"

"I've studied your face and read a secret there."

"Oh . . . Mr. Winde. . . ."

"You're surprised, are you? But I'm used to studying folk, and though you're reserved enough, I've read the proud young heart that would have nursed its own bitterness."

"I did not care to trouble you," I murmured sheepishly.

"In other words, you were afraid of your secret."

"That is true," I cried. "That is true indeed; and, sir, you wish me to tell my family of this?"

"The Lord wishes it, dear lad!"

I walked on beside him in moody silence. The evening was very still, troubled only by the tinkling of a fold-bell at Moon's Green, and the splash of our feet on the spongy level.

"It is quite true," I said at last, "that my family do not love me, and that I shall have no heartache in parting from my home, but my father and brother are passionate men, and when they hear——"

"So you're afraid of physical pain! Oh, lad, I thought better of you."

"I do not fear pain, but I fear the storm that will break. I shall probably be turned out and disowned."

"That's a light affliction," said Peter, "and 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.'"

"I repeat that I do not love my family, only—

oh, I must tell you the truth, sir. I have lived a quiet life until now ; I have been unhappy, but I have been in comparative peace. I have lived with thoughts and dreams, and it is hard to come to realities. If my father turns me out I shall starve."

" You can work for your living—you know how to work hard. But I've greater hopes for you, lad. I've hoped and prayed that you should follow in John Palehouse's steps and in mine."

" You mean that I should become a preacher ?"

" Certainly, lad. I've noticed before this that the Almighty has given you ' a mouth and wisdom.' So go forth and preach the Gospel to every creature."

We had reached Reedbed by this time, and Peter stood still.

" Yes, go forth ' because of the word of truth, of meekness and of righteousness, and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.' Tell your father of your convictions, cast aside your old life of groping, and come into the new life of grasping. ' How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that publisheth peace !' Lad, in this county of Sussex there are hundreds of villages where no one has preached the tidings of great joy. The Lord has called you, Humphrey. He has called you from the pastures of your father's farm, from the herds, and from the sheep-folds—and will you say : ' I pray Thee have me excused ' ? "

His voice rang out over the marsh, and a sudden gust of wind moaned " Amen " among the reeds. I held out my hands.

"I shall do as you wish and as God wishes. My sacrifice is very small, but I offer it with my whole heart."

He smiled and wrung my hand.

"God bless you, lad. Mary will be pleased when she hears this."

"I shall tell my father on my first opportunity."

"And when you have done so come to Shoyswell, and we'll arrange the future. Oh, lad, if only you knew how long I've had this at heart!"

He wrung my hand again, and we parted. I looked back after I had come to Hope Farm, and saw him still standing among the osiers of Reedbed. I knew that he was praying for me.

It was always my custom to walk home by the marsh, instead of by the shorter way across the fields, and before I had left the levels the first stars were flickering above the old Kent Ditch, and my lady moon was blushing over Appledore, kerchiefed in the mist. I walked quickly as the twilight deepened and the thoughts chased each other through my brain.

I realised that the sacrifice I was about to make was but a little one compared to those which had been offered rejoicingly by the martyrs before me. I had no dear home-ties to sever; no bitter partings would make me weep. My great fear was that my father would not turn me out of doors, but would shut me up and try to starve me into subjection. However, I thought this most unlikely. Upon one thing I was resolved. I would make my confession

to my father alone, and not in the presence of Clonmel.

It was dark when I arrived home, and a storm was blowing up from the west. The rain-drops were already on my face when I reached Brede Parsonage, and every now and then the wind raised a mournful shriek among the gables.

On entering the kitchen, where we generally had our meals, I found that my mother, sisters, and younger brothers had finished their supper. Only my father and Clonmel remained at table, and were already in the quarrelsome stage of their liquor, judging by my father's question as to "where the devil I had been all day?" and Clonmel's request to "shut the door and be damned!"

I took my seat without a word, and set a volume of "Tristram Shandy" before me on the table, to read while I ate my supper. I had grown to love books since Mary Winde had introduced me to her favourite authors, and had gone through a course of ridiculously miscellaneous reading, snatching my few spare moments, meal-times, and occasionally an hour in bed. I was far lost in the company of Tristram, Uncle Toby, Yorick, and Corporal Trim, when an extra loud oath from my father made me start.

"Zounds! but the fellow's no better than a Methodist!"

"Confounded Ranter," growled Clonmel, his face hid in a mug of ale.

"A Bible-class!"—and my father pounded the table till the ale leaped and swashed in the jugs,

"We'll be having daily prayers soon. What are you staring at, Humphrey, you idiot?"

"I was wondering what was making you so angry, sir?"

"The confounded curate at Piddinghoe has set up a Bible-class, and I've turned him off like the knave and Ranter he is. I'll have no Methodist humbugs in my parishes. Those Methodists are past bearing with, and they're not content with their pranks outside the Church, but must needs play Old Harry with matters inside it! Talk of toleration! I'd hang 'em as high as Haman if I had the managing of affairs. Let's drink to their damnation. Fill up your glass, Clon, and here's to their eternal roasting!"

Clonmel swung off his ale. "Damnation to the whole brood!" he roared. "Why, Humphrey, you're not drinkin'!"

"Nor do I intend to," I replied.

"You don't? Then I'll make you!"

He sprang up, and before I could resist, had flung his arm round my neck, and forced his tankard against my teeth. I struggled, but he held me like a vice, halfchoking me. At last I managed to wriggle an arm free. I struck him in the face with all my force, threw myself from him, and stood in the middle of the room, with dry skin and heaving breast.

Clonmel swore at me, but he offered no further violence, seeing that I had the fire-irons within reach.

"You young devil!" he screamed. "I'll serve

you out for this—you damned Methodist. I'll have your blood from you. I'll make you screech and pant for mercy!"

"By the Lord! What's the meaning of this, Humphrey?" cried my father.

"Clonmel is in a rage because I refuse to drink damnation to the Methodists," I replied, resolving to go on as well as I could with my confession.

"And why won't you drink?"

"Because—because I believe that they are honest and holy men; because I consider them foully and spitefully slandered; because I—I am myself a Methodist."

I brought the last words out with a gasp, and stood silently awaiting their effect.

My father's jaw dropped, and he gazed at me in the uttermost bewilderment and anger. Clonmel started up with an inarticulate oath, and sprang towards me. I darted back, and, seizing a chair, swung it above my head.

"Stand off, if you value your skull!" I cried, and he drew back, still cursing and swearing.

At last my father recovered speech.

"What the devil do you mean, Humphrey Lyte? Are you mad?"

"No, sir, I am sane—and a Methodist."

"And the foulest young devil that ever walked this earth!" roared Clonmel.

"Since when is this folly—knavery, I mean?" cried my father.

"I decided some weeks ago to join the Methodists,

but I put off my confession till to-day, and should not have made it even now had I not been forced. I meant to speak privately with you, sir, to-morrow."

"By all the blazes ! I never met such impudence. I've a good mind to horsewhip you."

"Stay, sir, I am too old for such threats. I assure you that I have not made up my mind without serious thought. I have found that the Church cannot satisfy——"

"Is this the way you serve the Church that has done so much for you ?" cried my father, assuming a clerical air. "You leave the paths of sound doctrine and embrace vapouring heresies. Pah !"

"I ask your pardon, but the Church has done nothing for me, and will, I am persuaded, still do nothing. The Methodists are not heretics ; on the contrary, they are more loyal to Church truth and discipline than are Churchpeople themselves. They fast twice a week ; they assemble daily for praise and prayer. Wesley and his followers at Cambridge used to be called the Sacramentarians, so great was their love for the Communion. My conscience——"

"Dearly beloved brethren, my conscience moveth me in sundry instances to play the game-cock with my betters," cried Clonmel, who was drunk.

"Hold your tongue, Clon, and let me deal with him. Look here, you fool, you are talking stuff and nonsense, but I'll soon see whether you mean what you say, or whether it's your usual damned effrontery. Either you abjure your devil's heresies, or you leave my house."

He was very flushed and excited, but I knew that he meant what he said.

"I was prepared for this alternative, sir, and have already made my choice. I leave Brede Parsonage."

"Go, then, and the devil take you!" he cried thickly.

I went towards the door, but Clonmel, who was still smarting from the blow I had given him, sprang to his feet.

"You young viper and villain, you! You shan't leave this house till I've made you curse the day you were born."

The next moment he had snatched up his hunting-whip from a chair beside him, and had sprung upon me, slashing me in the face. I grappled him, but he was too strong for me, and flogged me over the head and shoulders till I thought I should swoon. In mad desperation I seized him by the throat, and he brought both hands to bear at my fingers, dropping the whip. For a moment we swayed together; then he fell heavily to the floor, and lay there an instant as if stunned, before he staggered, cursing most horribly, to his feet. He would have closed with me again, but my father, who, during our struggle had been meditatively swilling, suddenly interfered, thrust us apart, and hurled Clonmel into a chair.

"You young beast!" he cried to me. "Now that you have done mauling your brother, leave my house for ever."

"I am going," I blurted out, half choked with passion.

Clonmel would have sprung up, but my father held him down.

"Let him alone, Clon. We've had enough for a clergyman's household. Be off, you vagabond, and if ever I catch you inside my gates I'll skin you alive."

My heart was beating so hard with fury that I could scarcely breathe, but I strode to the door and flung it open, letting a draught of wind and icy rain into the kitchen.

The next moment something whirled at my head and struck my temple. I felt the blood trickle into my eye, and glared back into the room through a crimson mist. Clonmel had managed to free a hand from my father's grasp, and had hurled a pewter tankard at me as a fitting farewell.

"What are you staggering there for?" roared my father. "Go to the devil with you!"

I gave one last glance at them both. The next moment I was out in the fold, and the night-wind was drying the blood upon my face.

CHAPTER IV

OF THE METHODIST AND RUTH SHOTOVER

I WENT through the yard, and, as I passed the lighted window of the room where my mother and sisters were sitting, the thought came to me how strange it was that I should have no loving stolen farewells to make before I went out penniless into the world. Kit and Archie were laughing and talking together in the Dutch barn, but they neither heard nor saw the outcast who strode past them into the night.

The wind was barking like a starving dog behind the meadow-hills of Udimore ; the clouds ran wildly across the sky, and between them danced the stars, hither and thither, here and there, while the horned moon scudded through the wrack. The rain fell hissing round me, and in a few moments I was drenched to the skin. I had left the Parsonage without hat or cloak ; moreover, I had taken off my boots on my return from Shoyswell, and wore only shoes which were in every way unsuited to the rough and stony road I trod. But I thought little enough of these things at that moment, for at first I was mad with rage, and then I was mad with grief. I strode

up the Cackle Street, and the light from the cottage-windows burnished the wet road, and bewitched the raindrops into a shower of garnets. Then I left the village, and the angry night threw her shroud round me, and her voices stormed at me, and her winds buffeted me as I half-walked, half-ran over the mud and stones. I felt the blood trickling down my face, so tore off the kerchief I wore knotted about my throat, and tied it round my head, which ached miserably.

I had no exalted feelings to compensate me for my bodily wretchedness. When dwelling beforehand on my confession, I had always pictured myself in some noble attitude, speaking noble words, while my father listened abashed, with "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" written on his face. The dream had been a glorious triumph—the reality was very like a pot-house brawl. Perhaps this was not entirely my fault, nevertheless, I felt bitterly ashamed of the fury that had knotted my veins, and nearly burst my heart, and, throwing myself down under the hedge, I sobbed great tearless sobs that tore my throat and chest.

I lay in the wet grass for over a quarter of an hour, then rose shivering, and pressed on to Broad Oak. I realised how useless it would be to try to reach Shoyswell by the fields on such a night, so turned down what I believed to be the road to Sedlescombe, and soon the fitful stormlight of the moon was shut off from me by overarching trees. I had not gone far before I saw that I had taken the wrong lane,

but my heart was so numb that the discovery did not distress me, especially as, on coming to Beckley Furnace, I realised that the track I followed would eventually bring me to Peasmarsch, where I knew a cottager who would, I hoped, let me lie in his kitchen during the night.

But the darkness was so great, and the storm so wild, that I soon wandered from my track, and became entangled in a maze of bypaths, which wound up and down and in and out of black woods, where the wind whispered, and rustled a twisted undergrowth.

I was hopelessly lost, and faint with cold and pain, for my clothes were as drenched as if I had fallen into the Rother, and my feet were so cut with the stones that I could hardly put them to the ground. My head ached terribly, and a kind of blindness seized me, so that in the glints of moonlight everything looked blurred and confused, and lights danced ahead of me, which at first I took for cottage windows, but which I soon saw were the creatures of my own brain. I cannot tell what kept me from throwing myself down in a ditch to die, for I had no spirit in me. But I struggled doggedly on, stumbling every now and then, and rising and pressing on again. At last the wood grew thinner, then seemed to fall away from me, the trees gliding and curtsying till I became terrified at my delirium—for it was not as if I passed the bushes and trees, but as if they passed me.

I found myself on a track of waste land, half

marsh, half wilderness, crossed by dykes, and studded with willows, bent and twisted like the tormented trees of hell. I knew that I must be on the outskirts of the Rother Levels, and that all would go well with me if I could find the river.

But the darkness cloaked the marsh on all sides, and though I pressed, as I thought, northwards, I soon discovered that I was going west, for on a sudden the moon shone in front of me, kissing the horizon, and showing me a group of barns and oast-houses about a hundred yards off. The shape of the buildings seemed familiar, and in another burst of moonlight I recognised a ruined farmstead known as Baron's Grange, which I had often visited in my walks. This told me that many acres of marsh must lie between me and the Rother, and that I should find it almost impossible to cross the treacherous swamp of dyke and osier in the dark. I was half dead with fatigue, for I had walked over thirty miles since morning, and it occurred to me that I could not do better than spend the night in a barn at Baron's Grange, and resume my journey at day-break.

I crossed the waste of rushes and osiers, and went into the ruined fold. All round me the farm-buildings raised tottering gables against the clouds, and their black windows were like sightless eyes. I crept into the oast-house barn, the roof of which seemed fairly watertight, and threw myself down upon a heap of straw. The place had evidently been used as a stable for cattle during the winter, for hay and

straw were littered on all sides, with piles of frost-bitten mangolds.

I lay on my back, staring at a ray of light that crept through a chink between the roof and the wall. The wind howled uncannily among the beams, and rumbled in the caverns of the oasts. I shivered. The kerchief I wore round my head was by this time saturated with blood, which poured from under it down my cheeks. My shoulders were horribly stiff and aching, both from the cold and from the lash of Clonmel's whip. My feet were numb, and though I swathed them in the hay, I could not restore sensation.

But my pain of body was nothing to my pain of mind; and I groaned as I lay, and cried to God to end the life of His miserable servant. In my agony and weakness I tossed in the straw, and cursed the life God had given me in His love. At last I found the relief of tears, and sobbed as if my heart would break, and fell asleep sobbing like a beaten child.

My dreams were distressful; I woke in a sweat, and so great was my discomfort that for a moment I actually wished myself back in the low, hot room where I slept at Brede Parsonage. The barn had been in profound silence when I fell asleep, but on waking I noticed that it was full of sounds—rustlings, flutterings, trampings, and groanings. Then a great fear seized me, and I cowered in the straw. I had been extremely nervous and superstitious as a child, and though when I grew older I had fought with my terrors, I had never entirely mastered them, and

now, when I lay enfeebled by weariness, pain, and misery, they utterly overpowered me.

All kinds of weird legends, sprung from the soil of the fields and fallows round me, came into my mind—Cicely of Cicely's Farm, who hanged herself on her own barn door, when the sun was red, and the sheep were bleating at the fold-gates, who wanders over the marshes with the suicide's stake in her breast, followed by her wraith-sheep, searching in vain for a fold to pen them in, and silence their bleating: Grey Clement of Stream Farm, who calls his cows home at sunset, even as he was calling them when his shepherd slew by his orders Clement's beautiful guilty wife in Pattenden's field: Colin Clamourne of Winterland Farm, who burned his new-born babe, whose spook wanders screaming through the woods of Ellenwhorne, a fire burning in his heart and shining through his breast and through his eyes. These and many other stories came to me as I lay with the sweat on my face, listening to the ghostly sounds that troubled the stillness of the old haggard. I thought to hear the rustle of women's dresses, the patter of children's feet, and often it was as if something touched me. At length I could bear it no longer. I sprang up, and rushed out into the fold.

At the same moment a wrack of clouds rolled off the face of the sky, and the starlight shone clearly into the barn I had left, showing me a number of rats, scampering and gambolling among the straw and mangolds. These had been the source of my fears, and in my relief I laughed out loud. Still, I

did not care to go back to the straw, which was shaking and heaving with its numerous inmates, so, as by a certain freshness in the air I knew that the dawn was at hand, I started out once more in search of the Rother.

The rain had ceased, and the wind was only sobbing. The dawn-star glimmered wan above Baron's Grange, and soon a steely light rode over the sky, and showed me the river not far off. I thanked God, for I had now nothing to do but to follow the Rother to Bodiam, whence a lane would take me to Shoyswell. But walking was not easy, for my feet sank deep at each step into the boggy ground, and every now and then I stumbled, and was almost too weary to rise. Moreover, the pains of hunger had begun to gnaw me. I had eaten practically nothing since my dinner at Shoyswell, for the disturbance with my father and Clonmel had taken place before I had done more than taste my supper. I drank greedily of the Rother water, and it refreshed me a little, but I soon saw that I could never hope to reach Shoyswell unless I first had food and rest.

I stumbled on by the sighing river, and gradually the dawn woke, and veiled the stars in her wavy skirts of flame. The Rother valley was yet dusk, but on the hills that flanked it I saw the sunrise lying, and suddenly the mist rolled back from a village on the crest of the southern ridge.

My heart leapt to see the little houses reflect the sun's amber matin-light on their windows, and unconsciously I turned towards that village on the hill.

I felt sure that I could find there some kind heart who would let me share his morning meal and rest by his fire.

I toiled painfully up the slope, with a throbbing in my head and a singing in my ears. I met some children at play by a group of pollards, and by the startled shrieks with which they fled, knew what a horrible sight my sufferings must have made me. My shoes had been torn off, and my naked feet were bleeding; my clothes were dripping with rain, and had become so disordered by brakes and brambles that my neck and half my bosom were bare. A bloody bandage was fastened round my head, and channels of blood were dry upon my cheeks.

I went a little further, and came to a garden which sloped from a russet-roofed house on the brow of the hill. As I staggered to the fence, and stood for a moment clutching to it, I noticed that I had passed out of the twilight, and had come into the golden mist of sunrise.

Hardly aware of what I was doing, I climbed the low bryony-tangled fence into the garden. The earth was damp and soft, and smelled sweet, and primroses and dog-violets starred the turf and borders. I went through a kind of shrubbery, nearly hanging myself in ropes of convolvulus, and came out on a lawn which stretched up to the house.

I stood abashed, for a young man was pacing the grass, a book in his hand. He was evidently a parson, for he wore black clothes and shovel-hat, but, instead of the parson's full-bottomed wig, his

own pale hair fell about his ears. He walked with a stoop, and looked frail and careworn.

I would have slunk away, for when a Methodist is hungry, it is not to the Parsonage he should come for bread. But at that moment he turned and caught sight of me.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?" His voice, though startled, was not unkind, and I replied, "I had no idea this was a Parsonage when I came into your garden, for I am a Methodist."

"But that doesn't tell me why you are here."

"I have tramped many miles, and am tired and hungry—but I am a Methodist."

He knit his brows and stared at me. He had a good face, but the lines round his mouth were very weak.

"You might tell me more about yourself besides that you are a Methodist. But I do wrong to question you when you're tired and fasting. Come into the house."

I was bewildered. I had not expected this reception from a parson. I staggered as I walked. He noticed it, and bade me lean on his arm.

"You can explain matters afterwards, but you shall rest and eat first."

"You are very trustful," I replied rather bitterly; "for all you know, I may be the worst kind of tramp and thief."

"I don't think so, and I'm good at reading faces. Besides, you are tired and hungry, and God forbid that I should deny you food and rest."

"Is that your Gospel?" I asked, touched by his simple kindness. "Beware, it may bring you into trouble."

"I think not," he answered gently. "But here we are in the kitchen. Don't be frightened, Rosie"—to a maidservant—"this gentleman has been out all night, and is tired and hungry. Heat him some soup at once"—then to me, "Sit here, my friend, and I shall fetch you some water to wash your feet."

He was gone, and I leaned back on the settle, and closed my eyes. I wondered for a moment if I were dreaming, but the cosy kitchen, the red-cheeked maid, and the hot soup she brought me with soaked bread, were real enough. The voracity with which I devoured my meal astonished my waitress, who refilled the bowl, and stared at me with the profoundest awe as I gulped it down. I had just upon finished when the parson returned, carrying not only a basin of warm water, but stockings and shoes.

He bathed my feet, then examined and bound up the gash on my forehead, and helped me to arrange my dress. While he performed these kind offices I thought it best to tell him my story, and let him know on whom he was bestowing his charity, but my recital nothing altered his goodness.

"I don't agree with you in the least," he said, "but that makes no difference. You are my guest for to-day, and you mustn't resume your journey till you are thoroughly rested."

"You are very good," I said brokenly. For the second time in my life I had found a kind heart, given to hospitality.

"I only do you a decent kindness. How tired you must be! Come, you shall sleep in my bed for a few hours while your clothes are dried." He drew my arm through his, and led me to a small sunlit room in the gable of his house.

"Is this Bodiam village?" I asked, while he helped me to undress, for I was so stiff and cramped that every movement was painful. "I thought old Mr. Henniker was rector of Bodiam."

"This is not Bodiam. It is Ewehurst, and I'm Guy Shotover, the curate-in-charge."

"Ewehurst! What a fool I was not to have recognised it! But I was sick and dazed, and I thought to have come further than this."

"Take courage, you are not far from your journey's end, and you will be another man after you have slept."

He left me, and I fell into a sleep where I dreamed of nothing but green fields, sunshine, and kind voices.

The sun was shining full on my face when I woke, and gazed stupidly round me, wondering where I was. I remembered in an instant, and jumped out of bed. My clothes had been cleaned and dried, so I hastened to dress myself. I had slept off in a great measure my anxiety and despair, and, though subdued, my heart was not so heavy as it had been a few hours ago. I was also physically refreshed, but not to such an extent, for my head still ached and

throbbed, and every now and then I shivered, and the next moment I burned.

It was nearly two o'clock, and before I had finished dressing, Guy Shotover came to summon me to dinner.

"But before we eat," he said, "I must introduce you to my sister. She was in bed when you arrived, as she sleeps badly, and seldom rises before seven. I have told her about you, and she's most anxious to see you."

"I fear that I am not a very suitable object to present to a lady."

"Nonsense. You look marvellously better after your sleep. There's a brilliant colour on your face."

I followed him downstairs, and through the parlour into the garden.

"Ruth is in the arbour, reading." We went along a path bordered with an array of daffodils, and came to a summer-house at the end of it. Great ropes of creeper hung in front of the arch, and between the leaves I saw the pale blue of a woman's gown. The next moment Shotover caught aside the blushing curtain of young shoots, and my eyes met those of the curate's sister.

She looked little more than a child. Her stature was low, and her figure slight, and she had the dimpled cheeks and soft white throat one loves to kiss in children. But her eyes were essentially un-childlike, though it was some time before I could tell what made them so—whether it was their resolution, their anxiety, or their pathos. Her hair was almost hidden under a scarf she wore wound over her head

and shoulders, but a narrow band of it was visible outside the muslin, and it was a rich, ruddy auburn, nearly red.

"Ruthie," said Shotover, "here is Mr. Lyte."

She rose, and dropped me a rather prim curtsy.

"I hope you feel refreshed after your sleep," she said shyly.

"Greatly refreshed, madam, and I am glad to be out again in the sunshine. What a lovely day to follow last night's rain!"

"Lud! It was indeed a dreadful night. What hardships you must have endured!"

"They are over now, and I shall think of them no more, but be thankful that I met such a kind friend in your brother."

"Lud! Guy is good," she said innocently, and I noticed with some surprise that her words brought a look of anguish to the curate's face.

She seemed to realise, in spite of my appearance, that I was not one of the common mumpers and vagabonds to whom her brother loved to give shelter, for the shyness with which she had greeted me passed away, and she chattered merrily as we strolled over the daisies towards the Vicarage. Her voice was musical, and though her speech was full of little school-girl affectations, I found her marvelously sweet to listen to, as she told me about the seminary at Peckham she had just left, about "young ladies," her companions, about her "studies"—confined to French, singing, and the use of the globes, it seems—and how glad she was to be back

home with Guy. No girl had ever spoken thus to me before. My sisters could not mention their school at Hastings without nudgings, gigglings, and allusions to a certain music-master; Mary Winde had never been to school, and would not have chattered of it so artlessly if she had. We came to a clump of daffodils; Miss Shotover picked one and gave it to me.

"La! how beautiful the garden looks to-day. The tulips are already out in the herb-walk. I'm vastly eager to see Sussex in spring-time. Guy and I came here only in November. We come from Golden Parsonage, in the county of Herts."

"Which is not so fair as Sussex, madam."

"No, faith!" she answered.

Her little hand was in the curate's, and I noticed that he fixed his eyes on her face with a look half of love, half of reverence. She could not have been more than eighteen, and he was evidently over thirty, but his whole behaviour seemed rather that of a child looking up to a parent, than that of an elder brother towards his slip of a sister. He was by no means as handsome as she, though his face was pleasing. He seemed anxious and careworn, and once, when he looked into her eyes, his lips twitched as if he were in pain.

Dinner was prepared in a little brick-floored room, sweet-smelling with hyacinths and violets. Miss Shotover noticed that her brother was depressed.

"Lud, Guy! You mustn't look so vastly glum, or you'll spoil my appetite. What shall I do to make you smile?"

She came up behind him as he sat, and putting her thin arms round his neck, laid her cheek against his. Thought I to myself—he will be a fool if he does not smile now; and he did smile, the cloud of misery passing from his brow, but not from his eyes. Soon we were all three talking together with laughter and friendliness, while a little bird sang in a cage by the window, and nearly drowned our voices in his own.

Suddenly there came the sound of a horse's hoofs on the gravel, followed by a knock at the hall-door.

"It must be Enchmarsh!" cried Miss Shotover, and I saw that every scrap of colour had left her cheeks.

"Surely not," said the curate. "He was here only yesterday."

"But I know it's he. That is his step in the hall, and that is his voice speaking to Rosie."

She sprang up, and I noticed that the sadness of her eyes had suddenly become the expression of her whole face, that she was no longer a little chattering school-girl, but a miserable, desperate woman. The impulse of my heart communicated itself to my limbs, and I took half a stride towards her. But the next instant she recovered herself, and tripped gracefully to the door as it opened and the maidservant announced—"Mr. Enchmarsh."

A fine, tall fellow of about three or four-and-thirty came in. He wore a rough and simple riding-suit, which could not, however, hide the grand proportions of his figure. His face was deeply bronzed; his eyes and brows were black as night. He wore

his hair cut short against his head, and parted at the side of his forehead, which gave him an additionally manly look. But there was an expression in his dark and restless eyes which repelled, even revolted me, and this instinctive dislike was not softened by the careless way he greeted Shotover, or by the familiarity with which he took the sister's hand.

He gave me scarcely more than a nod when the curate presented me, and ignored me almost entirely during the meal which the Shotovers invited him to share. He seemed, though evidently dreaded, on familiar terms with the brother and sister. His manners could not be described as actually bad, though they were swaggering and free. He rattled of his horse, his hounds, his hunt, and his house, called Kitchenhour, on the borders of Wet Level. He pressed Miss Shotover to ride out a-hunting with him, and won a reluctant consent. He snubbed her brother, who wished to go with her, telling him that he could never bestride any mount more spirited than a donkey. He asked me if I ever went hunting, and in the middle of my reply started speaking of something else to Miss Ruth, whom he called by her Christian name.

Soon after Miss Shotover had left the room, Enchmarsh became moderately drunk. The curate seemed anxious that he should not see his sister before he went away, but the squire insisted on bidding her farewell. She was sitting over some embroidery in her parlour, and when we came into the room, started up alarmed.

Her eyes were red, and her cheeks tear-stained. I fell back, and so did Shotover, but Enchmarsh strode quickly towards her, and took her rather roughly by the arm. "Here, dry your eyes," and she obediently unfolded a morsel of a handkerchief clenched in her hand, and soaked with tears. Then he whispered something to her, and a strange look crept into her eyes, mingled fear and audacity. I glanced at Shotover, and saw that his hands were both clenched, but his face was more miserable than angry. As for me, I could have knocked Enchmarsh down, and wondered why the curate did not do so.

"Your horse is ready, Enchmarsh," said Shotover at last, in a jerky, nervous voice.

"So'm I," replied the squire. "Don't you play the fool, you two ; there's my parting advice," and he flung himself out of the room, Shotover, after some hesitation, following him.

I felt keen embarrassment on being left alone with Miss Ruth, who was still fighting with her tears. I tried to beguile her to talk of her school, but the young ladies' seminary seemed to have lost its attraction, and her replies were monosyllabic. I heartily wished myself elsewhere.

It was nearly three o'clock, and when the curate came back, I told him that I must leave Ewehurst Parsonage. He would have persuaded me to stay the night, saying that he thought me feverish. But though I thought the same, I persisted in my resolution, and at last he gave way, declaring, however,

that I should drink a dish of his sister's chocolate before I started.

Either Miss Ruth was a very good actress, or she had suddenly recovered from her depression. "Lud! indeed you must stay for chocolate!" she cried, turning from the window, and showing me eyes once more bright and cheeks all dimpled with smiles. "You shall have chocolate, and cheese-cakes too. I made some this morning. Do you like cheese-cakes?"

"Very much," I answered lamely, somewhat taken aback at her sudden change of mood.

"So does Guy, and so do I—only I like meringues better. I learned to make cheese-cakes because Milly Rogers, one of the young ladies at Miss Wetherbee's seminary, likes them so. Don't you remember Milly, brother, and how beautifully she sang to the guitar when she stayed with us at Golden Parsonage?"

She ran to the curate and kissed him. He patted her hands, and her cheek, and turned away, his lips trembling.

At four o'clock a table was spread under a sycamore on the lawn, and the chocolate and cheese-cakes were served. In spite of her partiality for the latter, Miss Ruth did not eat many; she devoted her energies to forcing them down her brother's throat. He seemed unable to shake off his melancholy, and she seemed resolved that he should. So she fondled and chattered and laughed, and sang little snatches of song in a sweet though untrained voice. But for all her gaiety, I could see that she was in an agony of

nervousness. She started at any sudden noise, and the colour came and went on her cheeks.

"Now, Guy, another cheese-cake?" she coaxed. "What, you won't? You horrid fellow! that's because you don't like my cooking. Lud! I shall give it to the chicks, since you're so dainty."

A hen with five chickens had sauntered on to the lawn, and Ruth broke up the cheese-cake, and scattered the crumbs. Shotover sat watching her, his elbow on the table, his chin on his hand. I watched her too, as she crouched on the grass, some crumbs in the palm of her outstretched hand to tempt the timid fools. Her pretty innocence contrasted strangely with the wild eyes, quivering lips, and locked hands of an hour ago. What had given her back her girlhood? and why had Enchmarsh's dark face made her lose it, or rather cast it from her like a garment, and show in its nakedness her suffering womanhood? How was it that Enchmarsh had dared address her with such brutality, and her brother with such contempt? How was it that they had both endured his insults, like children under the lash, who can but weep and writhe in their shame?

A cry of delight interrupted my thoughts. Ruth had risen from her knees, and came towards me, holding a chicken in a cradle made by her two hands—she had the dearest little hands; the spring sun had just begun to bronze them.

"Look, Mr. Lyte! Look! Isn't he a sweet little fellow? Feel how soft he is," and she held the creature against my face. As she did so, her hand

accidentally touched my cheek, and at once a strange new divine thrill passed through me and quickened my heart.

The shadows were drawing in; the curate's set face looked grey in the waning light, and I rose to take my leave. Shotover lent me a pair of boots, and he and his sister walked with me as far as their wistaria-tangled gate.

"I shall not try to thank you for your kindness," I said to my host. "I am not equal to such a task. But you can guess my gratitude."

"I'm glad I was able to help you," he answered simply. "I like to feel that I can be of use to my fellow-men. Fare you well, Methodist; I hope to see you again soon. If ever you should pass this way, remember that there is always a bed for you at Ewehurst Vicarage."

I wrung his hand, and kissed Miss Ruth's, and they stood at the little gate till I had vanished round a corner of the lane.

I mused as I walked between the blackthorn battlements of the hedges, and the white blossoms against the blue sky made me think of Ruth Shotover's scarf against her gown. I mused on the curate and his sister, and on Enchmarsh, and felt that some mystery bound them together. I mused on the curate's sad face and kind heart, on his sister's merry laugh and miserable eyes, on Enchmarsh's brutality, and on his strange connection with the Shotovers—and the whole perplexed me.

The spring day, lulled by soft winds and tinkling

fold-bells, fell asleep. The sky darkened, and the first stars appeared like shining daisies over Furnace-field just as I was beginning to drag my legs wearily. I went down the lane of deep shadows, and came into the light that streamed from the open doorway. I knocked, and the next moment Peter Winde had sprung forward and dragged me into the kitchen.

"Lad, lad, dear lad ! You've done it ! The Lord helped you !"

"Yes, I have done it, and the Lord have mercy !"

Then the room swam, and Peter's eyes looked at me as through a mist. I cast up my arms, staggered, spun round, and fell in a faint at his feet.

CHAPTER V

OF THE METHODIST AND MARY WINDE

FOR a time all was blackness and silence, then streaks of flame shot before my eyes, and I gasped for breath. It was as if a huge weight lay on my chest; I thought that I was suffocating, and writhed and panted. Then a sudden light burst upon me, and I found myself lying on the floor, while Peter Winde bathed my forehead with water.

I moaned, but did not raise my head, which was softly pillowed, and lay for a while silent, with Peter's hand on my forehead. Then the room, which had seemed full of fiery mist, became clear again. I turned myself, and saw that my head rested on Mary Winde's lap.

For a moment I gazed speechless into her face, and noticed that there were tears on her eyelashes and cheeks; then I smiled feebly and sat up, gripping Peter's arm.

"Come, lad, you're better now," he said; "you were exhausted after your tramp. When did you leave Brede Parsonage?"

"Last night."

"Then why didn't you reach here sooner?"

"I lost my way—oh, it was horrible!"

I struggled up from the floor, and he drew me down beside him on the settle, and while Mary busied herself preparing supper in the outer kitchen, I poured forth my tale, and found relief in confession, as who does not?

Peter took my hand, and patted it as one would pat a child's.

"Take heart, lad. God measures our love by our efforts, not by our achievements, or we should all be in a sorry way. I've lived fifty years, and have met but two saints—John Palehouse and——"

"Whom?" I asked, as he hesitated.

"She's a woman," he said, "and you can hear her footsteps in the next room."

We sat for a long time in silence, while the firelight leaped on the walls and ceiling, and a great scarlet moon rose from beyond Iridge, and, filling almost the whole of the uncurtained window-pane, climbed up among the stars. Mary's feet sounded ghostly in the outer room, and now and then she crooned to herself little snatches of song which made me think of ruined oasts in a lonely field and spooks in some haunted shell of a farmhouse at dusk. I was glad when she came and stood in the doorway, the firelight falling on her, and called us to our supper.

"I cooked it myself, for Jane is gone to visit her parents at Bantony." Then suddenly my thoughts flew back to the other girl who that same day had

set before me fare of her own cooking, and I realised more than ever that Mary was not beautiful, that her figure was immature, her cheeks were pale, and her mouth was ill-drawn.

But she was so gentle and sweet that I soon forgot her plainness—that is to say if a face which wore such an expression of love and serenity could ever be called plain. She and Peter vied with one another in trying to raise my spirits, and to keep me from dwelling too miserably on the woes of yesterday. Peter spoke many kind words that I did not deserve, and Mary questioned me about Ewehurst Parsonage, the parson, and his sister.

“I have never seen Miss Shotover,” she said, “but I have often heard of her from the Cartwrights at Turzes. She sometimes drinks tea there. They tell me she is very beautiful.”

“She is indeed,” I replied, and there must have been more than an ordinary rapture in my voice and look, for Peter and Mary both laughed.

“Her brother’s a good fellow, I believe,” said the former. “I know very little of him except from hearsay, but he seems to understand his duties as a parson better than many in these parts. Not that he has more than two services a week in his church—I suppose we musn’t expect that of him at present—but he reads them reverently and well, and he visits his poor and cares for them.”

“And for any vagrant that he meets,” I said.

“I’m rather puzzled,” resumed Peter, “at the friendship between the Shotovers and the new

squire at Kitchenhour. Enchmarsh is a wild fellow, and his reputation is none too clean ; it's strange that I should so often see him riding with Miss Ruth."

"I believe they knew him in Hertfordshire," said Mary, "and perhaps Mr. Shotover thinks that the companionship of such a sweet girl as his sister will make another man of the squire."

"Humph !" grunted Peter, "you look at things from a woman's point of view, my dearie. It isn't likely that Shotover's zeal for souls should make him put his sister to such risk."

He fell a-meditating, and Mary and I had the conversation to ourselves during the rest of the meal.

When Peter had said grace, I asked him if I might go to bed, for I ached with weariness, and my head throbbed painfully. He gave me his arm up the twisting stairs, where the candle-flame cast our shadows uncouthly on the wall, and led me to a room looking out over a field to Shoyswell Wood.

"You slept in the oast-barn the first time you were here, but you shall lie between sheets to-night."

"I shall never forget my first visit to Shoyswell, sir. I have felt better and happier ever since."

"You were a strange lad, then. You made me think of an untamed colt I'd just been breaking in. The young beast kicked and fought with his harness, and hated his life, I'll be bound."

He wished me good night, and I heard him humming one of Wesley's hymns as he went downstairs. As for me, what could I do but fall on my knees at my bedside and thank God ?

I was just about to undress when I noticed that the daffodil Miss Shotover had given me was still in my buttonhole. It was faded, and for a moment I thought of throwing it away, but remembered that I needed a bookmark for my Bible, so put it between the pages, furious with myself because I blushed as I did so.

I flung off my clothes and was soon in bed. The window was uncurtained, and I could see the moon hanging like a crescent of yellow glass in the space, and the stars flashing between the tossed branches of a tree that shadowed my pane. I became conscious of a vague, delicious smell which made me think of September hop-fields and smoking kilns, and I saw in the moonlight that a bunch of dried hops hung above my bed, and swung gently in the draught of the night wind.

My sleep was uneasy with dreams—of Brede Parsonage, my father, and Clonmel, of wet fields and woods, and long twisting roads, down which I trudged wearily on and on, passing only ruined farms and half-burnt cottages, my legs staggering under me, my head swimming. I woke, and the horror and fatigue were still with me. I tried to raise myself in bed, but was helpless, and could only lie and listen to the birds chirruping their dawn-song among the apple-trees, while the stars paled and the sky flushed, and the sunshine crept among the clouds.

It seemed hours later that I saw Peter Winde in the room. He spoke, but his voice came to me only

in a confused murmur, and when I myself tried to speak, I found that the words would not do my bidding, but crowded on my tongue without connexion or sense. Then the walls of the room seemed to come together, and I to fall backwards into the dark.

I remember nothing clearly of the days that followed. I spent them sometimes sleeping, sometimes lying awake, every limb racked with pain, sometimes tossing in delirium. I saw faces around me, but they appeared and disappeared, changed and wavered like the faces of a dream. I often thought myself at Brede Parsonage and a child once more, smarting and aching under the blows of my father or Clonmel—for the pain was always with me—and sometimes I would fancy myself at Ewehurst, drinking chocolate with Miss Shotover on the lawn. But my most constant vision was that of the endless twisting roads, along which I trudged, sometimes in the sunshine, sometimes in the dark, and sometimes at twilight. Once I thought I felt a woman take my hand and kiss it and bathe it with tears, and to this hour I do not know if it were a dream.

One day I woke out of this whirl of vision, delirium, and phantasmagoria. It was evening, and the sky was soft and throbbing with the sunset. The birds were gurgling and twittering in Shoyswell Wood, the cows were lowing in the stalls, and a girl's voice was speaking just under my window.

"I'm so glad he's better."

I sat up in bed, and saw Mary sewing close by me.

"Who is that outside?"

She started, but answered calmly:

"That is Miss Shotover."

I fell back on my pillows.

"Miss Shotover!" I repeated in a low voice.

"Yes. She rode a-hunting past this farmhouse the day after you arrived, and asked how you did; and hearing that you were ill, she and her brother have often been to inquire after you."

"Have I been ill a long time?"

"About a fortnight."

"Was I near dying?"

"We thought so at one time, but you are better now—and you must not talk any longer, you must go to sleep."

"I'll do my best, but first tell me, was it you who nursed me?"

"Yes, father and I."

"Thank you, Mary!"

I stretched out my hand, and she came over to the bedside and took it. For a moment her fingers lay in mine, then she drew them abruptly away.

"Go to sleep," she said almost roughly.

I slept during the greater part of the days that followed, and sometimes Mary was with me, and sometimes her father. Once I noticed a basket full of nectarines by my bedside, and was told that the Shotovers had sent them. The same answer was given a short while later to my question as to who had sent the glorious Lent lilies with which my room was decked. I had no doubt but that the brother

and sister had taken an interest in me, and the thought solaced my waking hours and sweetened my dreams.

I grew quickly better, and one day, after the doctor had left, Peter came up to my room and said :

"Dr. Hewland thinks that you might come downstairs to-day ; and I believe that it would be a good thing, as the Shotovers have promised us a visit this morning, and are very anxious to see you."

I declared myself more than willing to rise, so dressed with the help of Peter. My pulses beat fast with quickening health and hope, and I went downstairs with an agility remarkable in one only just recovering from a severe attack of fever. I told myself that it was the joy of convalescence that brought the flush to my throat and cheek, but in my heart of hearts I realised that my pleasure and excitement were due to Peter's words, "The Shotovers promised us a visit this morning." I heard a girl's voice in the kitchen, and my eyes shone, but it was only Mary speaking to the maid.

"When do you expect the curate and his sister ?" I asked Peter, as I sat in an armchair by the fire, with a rug over my knees.

"Not for an hour or so. You and Mary must entertain each other till then. I'm going to visit the lambs in the river-field."

He left the room, and Mary drew her chair to the opposite side of the hearth, and brought her sewing—snowy folds of linen on her lap, and the sound of

stitching to mingle with the crackle and roar of the fire.

"I am sure you will like Miss Shotover when you know her," I remarked, somewhat irrelevantly, after a silence.

"I do know her a little," said Mary, "and I like her very much."

"I am sorry for her. She has such miserable eyes."

"Poor girl! I think she must have had trouble."

"And yet she laughs so often"—I was speaking more to myself than to Mary—"and she cannot have had much sorrow, she is only a little schoolgirl."

Mary sewed in silence, and I watched the hands of the clock move slowly round. A fat, short-legged puppy came sprawling in at the door, and I enticed the little brute on to my knee. The clock struck the hour, and I started. The Shotovers would soon arrive.

"Mary, pray bring me the mirror that hangs by the door."

"No, sir, I will not!"

"That means that I am not fit to be seen after my illness. Bring me the mirror and let me judge for myself."

"I shall not bring it to you, for I value it, and when you have looked into it, you will throw it across the room and break it."

"You can catch it in your apron—but bring it here, I beseech you."

— She fetched the glass, and I made a wry face at the countenance it reflected—deadly pale, save for

the black brows, and an ugly purple scar across the left temple.

"Mary, how can I meet Miss Shotover?"

She would have spoken some comforting words, but at that instant horses' hoofs clattered in the yard and, giving me a smile that made her beautiful, she hurried to the door.

The next moment I heard Miss Shotover's voice, and the sun, streaming suddenly into the room, fell upon her as she stood on the threshold. She wore a dark riding-habit, a three-cornered velvet hat and buff chamois gloves with gauntlets reaching half-way up her arm. Her hair was slightly powdered, and tied at the nape of her neck, her cheeks were flushed, her lips parted, and her breath was fast with exercise; her eyes were sweet with kindness.

"Please, please don't move!" she cried, when I would have risen. "Lud! you look dreadfully ill. Oh! Oh! what a sweet little puppy!"—and the next moment the lucky beggar was whisked off my knee into her arms. "I do so vastly love puppies and kittens and little chickens. But here's Guy, looking glum because he wants to speak to you and I won't stop chattering."

Shotover stepped forward and shook me by the hand, and the next moment Peter joined us, and we all sat round the fire. At first our talk was laboured—we spoke of my returning health and of the weather. At last Mary asked Miss Ruth if she were not sorry that the hunting-season was over, and we fell to talking of the hunt. I had sometimes

ridden with the hounds—only on rare occasions, for I had hard work to do, and no horse of my own in the Parsonage stables—and my heart leapt with the memory of those days when the woods shrilled with the huntsman's horn, and the fox broke covert through the long grass of Pepperling Eye, and my horse, bounding under me, seemed scarcely to touch the earth. The conversation was chiefly between Miss Ruth and me, for the others knew little of our topic, but we soon digressed into a discussion on Fielding, in which everybody joined. The parson held with the new fashion, and vowed that he would never let his sister read *Tom Jones*. Peter told him that Mary had read it from cover to cover, and I championed Peter.

It is strange that I should remember the details of our chat so clearly, how friendly we grew over it, and how surprised we were when Jane's appearance with a tray of cake and mead told us that twelve o'clock had struck, and that our visitors must be going. Miss Ruth was full of mirth and high spirits, and her brother smiled at her laughter. Only once her bright eyes clouded, and that was when Peter Winde pressed her and the curate to stay for dinner, and she answered, "My brother and I are promised to dine at Kitchenhour."

The cake was eaten and the mead drunk; Mary, who had made them, was praised, and blushed at her praises; and our friends rose to leave. The next moment I was gazing at the door through which Miss Ruth had just vanished.

"Isn't she beautiful?" I said to Mary.

"Yes, and such a sweet girl!"

Mary Winde and Ruth Shotover had evidently fallen in love with each other, for many were the visits that during the next fortnight Mary paid to Ewehurst and Ruth to Shoyswell. The latter were the most frequent, as Mary could be ill spared from home, and the two girls would sit and talk in the kitchen, where I often joined them.

Miss Ruth's moods varied exceedingly. Sometimes she was all laughter and high spirits; sometimes she was downcast, with the tears not very far from her eyes. She spoke little of her life at the Parsonage, and once she appeared with her eyes red, and told Mary that she had had trouble at home, but begged that she would ask no questions.

The weeks went by, and the swallows came back with May, and I passed through convalescence to perfect health. During the long days when I sat inactive in my chair by the hearth, or walked, leaning on Peter's arm, in the fields or in the garden, he and I had many discussions as to my future. He was just as vehement as ever in his wish that I should be a preacher, and carry the Gospel through broad Sussex, even as Wesley had carried it through broad England. I could earn my bread by working on the farms round the hamlets I visited, and Peter and I mapped out my journey between us. He insisted on lending me five pounds, so that if I could not find work I need not starve.

"This is neither the hay-time nor the harvest, lad,

and many a yeoman to whom you offer your services will turn you away, saying that he has enough hands on his farm. And even if he takes you on, what will be your wages? Sixpence a day, or perhaps only food and bed: So take the money, and God speed you with it. I'm not sending you to a soft life, Humphrey, or to an easy one, but I'm sending you to a good life and a great life. Oh, I trust that when you return here in a month's time you will be able to look back on many souls who once sat in darkness, but now see great light."

And I, sitting opposite him in the ember-glow, murmured "Amen."

I shall never forget the last night I spent at Shoyswell. Mary and I sat side by side on the floor in front of the fire, and Peter read to us out of his Bible how Jesus Christ sent out His disciples two and two before His face, bidding them be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Then we all three knelt on the flags and sang Bishop Ken's Evening Hymn, while outside the wind crooned a low cradle-song to the trees, and the stars yearned through the mist of the spring night.

The next morning we rose early, and ate our breakfast at six. My bundle had been made up the evening before, and, as I had no clothes whatever except those I wore, it contained sets of Peter's stockings and underlinen, as well as the five pounds he had lent me. He also gave me a pistol, which would be useful to the lonely traveller by night. I was heartsick at parting with my kind friends, but

life, the world, and labour lay before me, and I was full of good resolutions and zeal.

Peter and Mary walked with me to the end of Shoyswell Lane. The birds were singing gaily, and as we passed under the trees, so beautiful in their spring green, a robin began to trill and twitter. I remembered how that little red throat had brought me comfort on the miserable morning after my Confirmation, and I seemed once more to stand in twilight All Saints' Street, with the cobalt shadows on the sea.

We came to where the lane joined the high road to Wadhurst, my first halting-place, and I turned to Mary to say good-bye.

"Remember me to Miss Shotover," and she promised.

We had been so like brother and sister during the last few weeks that I half thought of kissing her, but something in her face as well as in my own heart forbade it, and I merely put my lips to the little brown hand that shook in mine.

Then I turned to Peter. "Bless me before I go," and I knelt down before him, and he laid his hand on my head and prayed God to bless and keep me, and lift up the light of His countenance upon me, and give me peace "henceforth and for ever more."

CHAPTER VI

OF THE METHODIST AS A WANDERER

THE wind that brings the scent of flowers to city gates in May was blowing over the fields as I tramped westward with the tears in my eyes. Awe and zeal and sorrow mingled in my heart. Awe at the life-work laid upon me, zeal for its success, sorrow at the parting which had just taken place. How good they had been to me, that Methodist farmer and his daughter ! They had been father and sister to one who was to all intents fatherless and sisterless. They had loved me and helped me, and had pointed through the clouds to the sun.

I trudged on, my bundle slung on a stick over my shoulder, for all the world like a tramp or gipsy, and an evil-looking fellow I was, no doubt, with my thick bent brows and white, scarred face. The day grew every minute warmer and sweeter ; the country was waking, throwing off her night-robe of mist and gloom, clothing herself in sweet scents, sweet sounds, sweet sights, sweet sunshine, and laughing a joyous Godspeed to the Methodist.

I went by the farmhouses of Miskyns and Cotten-

den, with old Churchsettle down in the valley, and came at last to a cross-road known as Shover's Green. This was about two miles from Wadhurst, and as far as I had ever walked from Brede Parsonage, the country beyond it being an unknown land. I stood by the signpost, and gazed down the long white road before me, and began to tremble and shake like a girl. I was to preach at Wadhurst, but what should I say? I had never preached before; might not my tongue falter and fail in its new task? The sweat was on my face; I was like a nervous actor shuddering in the wings, while on the stage his cue is being spoken. But suddenly some words came to me, Bible words: "Take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." I lifted my hat, and prayed as I stood by the signpost at Shover's Green, with the long grass waving round my knees.

Reassured and strengthened, I went on, and came to Wadhurst, a mass of cottages and windmills swarming round a slender spire. It was nearly eight o'clock, and the village was awake and flooded with sunshine. The house doors were open, and the housewives stood in them; children played in the street; girls in brightly-coloured gowns grouped together and gossiped; men and lads loafed against the doorposts, the inn porch, and the lych-gate.

There was a party of yokels chatting and joking in the market-place, where stood a cart from which the horse had been unharnessed. I sat down on the shaft and watched the people. I saw that many of

them stared suspiciously at me, especially the group of farm-lads at my elbow. I read a few verses of my Bible, breathed a prayer, and climbed into the cart.

"I have something to say to you," I cried, standing up in the cart.

Every one started and looked amazed; then some laughed, and a man in a smock cried:

"Go on, muster!"

My courage had deserted me, my tongue stuck and stammered, and my knees shook so that I nearly fell down in the cart. I felt utterly unfitted for the task before me. I was not used to speaking to others of spiritual things, for my confidences would have been laughed at by the family at Brede Parsonage, and how was I suddenly to bring my heart to my lips, and pour into indifferent, perhaps hostile ears, the most sacred feelings of my soul?

I stood irresolute, my head held down, my cheeks scarlet. Then a girl tittered, and I was ashamed. I lifted my head, and threw it back, and the next moment a torrent of words rose to my lips.

I have only a faint recollection of what I said. I stammered, I remember, to begin with, but soon my speech flowed more smoothly, and a mad yearning love of those shepherdless sheep before me filled my heart and set my words on fire. I told them of Christ's love for them, of the help He offered, and of the reward He promised. There was no order or method in my sermon; the thoughts ground and clashed against one another like stones in a stream.

I spoke for nearly half an hour, then stopped suddenly, for the strange power that had upheld me was gone, and throwing myself down in the cart, I hid my face and groaned.

There was a confused murmur all round me. "A Methodee!"—"Off his head!"—"Take un to the lock-up!"—"Quite a boy, and as crazed as Nebuchadnezzar!"—"What rubbidge the poor chap spoke!"

This was not encouraging, and I realised that to lie groaning on the floor of a cart would by no means dispel the idea that I was mad. So I sprang up, and climbed down into the street, pushed my way through the crowd, and hurried out of the market-place.

Some of the people followed me, a few of them interested, but most of them jeering. Well-nigh in despair I turned and said :

"I am not mad, but am feeling very wild and miserable, so please do not follow me. I shall see you again perhaps in a month or so. Think over my words, or rather God's words, which He forced me to speak."

There must have been an unusual look on my face as I said this, for the people slunk away without further badgering me.

I strode forward between the hedges, reflecting on my late adventure. I felt that I had not made a good beginning to my ministry. Perhaps I had left Wadhurst in too great a hurry, perhaps I should have stayed, and reasoned with the people, perhaps I

should even now go back to them. But I realised that this would be worse than useless, so sped on, resolving to act more wisely in future.

The next matter to consider was where to find work and wages—for I had resolved not to touch Peter's five pounds till sheer want drove me to it. Fortune favoured me ; my first application met with success, and I was given half a day's work among the sheep at a farmhouse called Little Pell. I toiled contentedly till sunset, when the farmer's wife called me into the kitchen and gave me and the other farm-hands a supper of bread-and-broth, after which I was taken to a loft full of sweet hay and left there to sleep.

The sunshine on my face awoke me, and I rose singing for light-heartedness. At the farmhouse I was given a cup of milk and some rye-bread, and half an hour later set out for Rotherfield, my next halting-place.

The day was sweet and warm, and I reached Rotherfield about noon. There I bought some gingerbread, and ate it by the side of one of the three rivers which are born in the flats near the little town. Then I went to the market-place, and waited for an opportunity to begin my sermon. I did not wait long. In the churchyard close at hand the Burial Service was being read over a child's grave. A curate, with muddy top-boots showing under a surplice well-frayed with his spurs, was hurrying through the Church's sweet words of consolation. The mother sobbed bitterly, and the father, little

more than a lad, with a look of dogged misery on his face, groaned aloud during the unseemly gabble. The service came to an end; the curate strode off without a word, though the mother's tears had moistened the grass at his feet. Then I went up to them, and spoke to them and to the little group of mourners. The group widened into a crowd, and I ceased to speak of the dead child, but turned to death itself, and told them of the hope beyond the squalid tether of their lives.

Whether it was the solemnity of the occasion, or that I spoke more powerfully and simply than before, I do not know. But my words produced a better effect than at Wadhurst, and when I had finished I heard murmurs of "Thank you," and "God bless you." Happier than I had felt for many a day, I bade the people farewell, and had little difficulty in finding work at a farmhouse in the neighbourhood.

I shall not give in detail the rest of my journey across Sussex to the borders of Hampshire. From Rotherfield I crossed the valley of Jarvis Brook to Crowborough, then went on to Cuckfield and Cowfold, and through many a village to Fernhurst, where you can see the Hampshire downs. I preached in every market-place, meeting sometimes with success, sometimes with what seemed utter failure. Since the death of Wesley, eight years before, and the schism of the Methodists from the Established Church, Methodism had fallen into bad repute, and I was often greeted with jeers, even

stones and mud. Moreover, my youth was in my disfavour, and at many a market-cross a rude voice from the crowd would exclaim, "Where's yer mammy, my boy?" or, "Ye're unaccountable young to be out wudout yer nurse," or, "Yer had better go back to school, or yer'll be whipped for playing truant." In several villages where I preached, the people used to tell me of another preacher who had gone before me—"a man of powerfuller words than you, my lad." I wondered who this man might be, and longed to make up with him, for my heart went out to him, hearing that he was a "Methodee." But when I reached Fernhurst, I was told that he had gone on into Hampshire.

In spite of the disappointments and failures that dogged my path, that month of wandering was very happy, almost the happiest of my life. There were, it is true, moments when I would throw myself down and nearly weep in my hopelessness, but there were also moments which will be sweet to muse on when I lie dying. I often had difficulty in finding work; yet this did not disconcert me much, for whenever I was so fortunate as to be given a day's labour the farmer paid me well. So during the whole journey I had no cause to touch Peter Winde's generous loan. It was then that I thanked God that my father had forced me to toil on the farm at Brede Parsonage instead of sending me to school and college like other gentlemen's sons. For I was as useful in barn, field, or fold as the oldest farm-hand, and my fame as a labourer far exceeded my fame as a preacher. "De

föaks may ferget yer sarmons, lad," said an old farmer at East Mascalls with whom I took service, "but dey'll never ferget wot a fust-rate hand yer wur wi' de ewes, surelye!"

During this month there were moments when I thanked God for the mere joy of living. It was so sweet to feel the wind on my face and to press on over wet roads, my cheeks sprinkled with the soft splashing rain. I loved the twilight, and the rosy sleepy dawn. I loved the noontide, when the cows stood knee-deep in the streams, and I loved the solemn nights, when I walked through a great speaking silence. At the beginning of my journey I used to sleep in barns or lofts, but soon I grew to prefer the leeseide of a haystack or hedgerow, and often I lay among last year's leaves in the great beech-woods, listening to the scuttle and flutter of the night creatures, and watching the stars that shimmered through the moving tester of the trees.

When I had come to the borders of Hampshire, at Fernhurst, I went southward and preached at the villages of Chidham, Bosham, and Appledram, on the marshy seaboard below Chichester. Then, turning inland, I carried the Gospel to the Down hamlets, and northwards to Fletching. From Fletching I decided to go back to Shoyswell through Maresfield and Mayfield, revisiting Wadhurst.

It was Sunday morning when I entered Maresfield, and the church bells were pealing a loud *Sursum Corda* over the fields. It had been my custom in villages where there was no Methodist meeting-room

to worship at the parish church; and I was soon kneeling in a back pew of old S. Bartholomy's, at rest and at peace in the cool gloom.

There was a gentle footfall on the aisle, and I thought that some woman had just come into the church, but on looking up I saw the flutter of a surplice, and knew that it was the parson who trod so reverently. This surprised me, accustomed as I was to the stride and swagger of my father and Clonmel, and the jingle of their spurs against the pulpit steps. I craned my head to see the clergyman's face. He was Guy Shotover.

I caught my breath. What could he be doing at Maresfield? Had he been appointed to the living? Surely not, in the short time since I had last seen him. Perhaps he was only doing duty there for the day. I really did not trouble to explain his presence I was too much occupied in looking for Miss Ruth. At first I could not see her, and came with a pang to the conclusion that she was not in church. But at last I caught sight of her in a side pew, and could hardly take my eyes off her during the rest of the service. She looked pale and worn, I thought, and her head drooped pathetically under her wide hat. She did not notice me, for she kept her eyes fast fixed on her Prayer Book, in which I might have followed her example.

Guy read the service reverently, and preached an earnest, though not very brilliant, sermon, after which we sang the Old Hundredth, and went out into the sunshine. I waited in the porch for Miss

Ruth, and in a few moments she appeared, looking very downcast. She would not have seen me, had I not touched her arm.

She started, coloured, and held out her hand.

"Lud, Mr. Lyte! This is an unexpected pleasure for me."

"And for me," I murmured, as I pressed her hand against my lips.

"Are you and your brother staying at Maresfield?" I asked.

"For to-day. Here comes Guy. You didn't expect to meet Mr. Lyte at Maresfield, did you, dear?"

"I'm surprised, but I'm also delighted. You must come and dine with us at Fiveash Farm. We're lodging there, for Maresfield is one of my Rector's livings, and the curate is sick, so I'm in charge of both parishes."

"But they are twenty miles apart."

"Yes, and that means services on alternate Sundays only. But it's the sole thing to be done, as my Rector doesn't wish to pay for another curate."

I readily accepted Shotover's invitation to dinner, and we set off down a bridle-path to a farmhouse cuddling in the hollow.

"Have you seen Mary Winde lately?" I asked Ruth.

"Faith, yes! Guy and I spent an hour at Shoyswell yesterday on our way to Maresfield. Mr. Winde and Mary are vastly well, and longing to see you home."

"I shall be at Shoyswell on Wednesday, I hope."

"And at Ewehurst on Thursday," put in Guy.

"But here we are at Fiveash. Go, Ruthie, and hasten Mrs. Ferrers with the dinner. The Methodist is starving, I'm sure."

Dinner was served in the outer kitchen, and both brother and sister were in high spirits, and laughed and talked incessantly during the meal. I sat opposite Guy, and whether it was that I had not seen him for so long I do not know, but I was more struck than ever by the weak lines round his mouth ; and his laughter, which was nervous, and his conversation, which was excited, confirmed me in the idea that he was even more emotional and high-strung than his sister.

After dinner the curate retired to his room to pore over the afternoon's sermon—he always learned his sermons by heart, and had a final rehearsal a short time before delivering them—and Ruth and I went out into the garden. The farmhouse had once been a Manor, and the garden had been a pleasure. Tiger-lilies, sweet-william, flox, and peonies still grew among the long grass, and wicker arches smothered in roses yet stood.

From the bottom of the garden the fields sloped upward, dotted with sheep, and on the crest of the ridge was a little wood.

"Let's gather bluebells," cried Ruth ; "there's a vast deal in the coppice yonder."

"I should like nothing better, but do you think it wise to go so far ?" Look at the sky"—and I pointed to some fierce rag-edged clouds that were rolling up from Plawhatch in the west.

"Lud! It won't rain for an hour yet, and I do so vastly want to gather some bluebells for Guy. He loves flowers."

She laid her hand coaxingly on my arm, and looked up at me wistfully with childlike face and unchild-like eyes.

"Come on, then!" I cried, clasping her brown fingers in mine, as if she were a little girl I was taking for a holiday. I suddenly realised what I was doing and dropped her hand, while the colour mounted on my cheeks.

I spoke scarcely a word the whole of our way to Piekreed Wood, though my companion chattered gaily enough. I fear she must have found me woe-fully poor company, but, after all, I was silent only because I was thinking of her. The woods were full of shadow and peace. Ruth flung herself down among the bluebells and regaled me with an account of how she had once spoiled a new white gown by lying on damp grass, and how Miss Wetherbee of the seminary had sent her to bed early as a punishment.

There is a golden chain running through my life, binding me to God, and its links are the happy moments He has given me. The first link was forged on the night I slept by the Rother, the next on the afternoon I gathered bluebells with Ruth in Piekreed Wood. We filled our hands full of flowers, while one of us talked and one of us listened. We never noticed the sunshine fade and the sky become first dappled, then overcast with grey, or heard the first drip of rain upon the leaves. A vivid flash of light-

ning made us both start, and spring to our feet. Ruth^h dropped her bluebells, and clapped her hands to her ears as a terrific burst of thunder rocked the trees.

"Oh, Lud! Mr. Lyte! Mr. Lyte! What shall we do?" And she ran to me and clutched my arm.

"We mustn't stay here. We must hurry out into the open."

Her lips trembled. "I'm afraid of thunder," she said plaintively.

"I'll take care of you," I replied, and the words made my heart warm. For the first time in my life I realised the sweetness of having some one weaker than myself to protect.

I drew her hand through my arm, and we forced our way through the hazel undergrowth, and scrambled over the fence into the meadow. The rain fell steadily in heavy warm drops. Ruth's flimsy dress began to cling about her shoulders. I flung off my coat and wrapped it round her.

"I insist! You shall wear it!" I cried, when she would have objected. "Come, we must run to that little shed in the next field. We shall be sheltered there."

We ran over the grass, the frightened sheep galloping before us, their bleating mingling with the crash of the storm. We were soaked to the skin by the time we reached the shed.

Ruth was shivering as I drew her into shelter. She stood clinging to my arm, and her wet hair dripped upon my sleeve. There was a ewe with two lambs at

the back of the shed. The creatures seemed tame, and did not try to leave on our entrance ; and one or two sheep, evidently more terrified of the storm than of us, came in and huddled their soaked fleeces together in a distant corner.

"Do you think me very silly to be so frightened?" asked Ruth.

She gripped my arm with both her nervous little hands, and I tried to answer her, to reassure her ; but words failed me, for the clasp of her fingers and the appeal of her eyes had bound my lips with silence, and filled my heart with a strange humility. "Why was I ever born?" I had often blasphemously flung that cry to God. Now I realised that I had been born for this hour, for this warming of the blood, this quickening of the heart, for this blessed birth of love and love's twin, humbleness.

"The storm is passing over," said Ruth, and the silly sheep ran out into a sudden burst of sunshine.

"Lud ! how silent you are," she added, lifting her eyes to mine.

"I am wondering," I said slowly, scarcely realising what I uttered, "whether it would be safe to venture out."

"The rain has stopped," said Ruth, "and I expect Guy will be anxious about us. Please take your coat back ; I don't need it now, and you're shivering with cold."

"I am not cold," I answered, and I spoke truly, though my limbs were numb.

We went out into the field. The thunder-clouds

were rolling away; the thunder breeze swept the grass and sang. I sang, too, as I strode along.

"I never heard you sing before," said Ruth. "What are you singing? Is it one of Mr. Wesley's hymns?" she added, lowering her voice. My Methodism always seemed to inspire her with feelings of awe.

"I don't know what it is. It's nothing of Wesley's."

"I like to hear you sing. You've such a deep voice. But, lud! pray don't stride so fast; I can't keep up with you."

I slackened my pace, and ceased my song to listen to her voice, which was sweeter. We soon met Guy, who had come out to look for us, and with him we strolled back to the house, Ruth still wearing my coat about her shoulders.

On arriving at Fiveash I changed my wet clothes in the curate's room. He begged me to stay the night, and I consented, for it would be sweet to sleep under the same roof as Ruth.

All the afternoon and evening I was in a state of exalted happiness, which, I think, must often have shown itself in my eyes and on my lips. Ruth was never absent from my thoughts. I loved her. I did not know if she loved me—but I loved her, and that was all that mattered at present. How blessed it is to love!

We went to Evening Prayer at four o'clock, and afterwards to a children's Bible-class at the village school. Ruth took care of the very little ones, and most of my time was spent in watching her as she

sat at the back of the room, her arm round one babe, another on her lap, a third at her feet, playing with the ribbons of her shoes. Guy had a rare tact with children, and I was surprised to see how well he taught them. After we had returned to Fiveash and had seated ourselves before the kitchen fire, the curate said :

“What do you think the chief virtue to cultivate in a child ?”

I considered.

“Well, after all,” I said at length, “I think it is the virtue of love with sacrifice.”

“Cannot love exist without sacrifice ?”

“Never ! Love without sacrifice is like faith without works : it is dead.”

“I don’t agree with you. I believe—I—I’m sure that love can exist without self-sacrifice.”

“Indeed it cannot. For sacrifice is the soul of love, and when the soul has left the body, then the body is lifeless, worthless—carrion !”

I was flushed and excited with my argument, and would have pushed it further, but I suddenly noticed that Shotover looked ill at ease, and his sister unhappy, so started on another topic.

I went to bed early that night, and lay awake a long while thinking of Ruth. I was far too happy to sleep. I built a dozen castles in the air. True, I was only a poor tramping Methodist, without home, and estranged from my kin ; but the brother and sister had already shown me by their friendship what little account they took of our religious differences,

and the day would come, I felt sure, when I should be no longer poor and homeless ; then I should have Ruth Shotover for my wife. How blessed it is to love !

I fell asleep shortly after midnight, and woke in a sweat, conscious that some one was in the room. The morning dusk poured in upon a figure standing motionless at the foot of the bed. I held my breath, and felt for my pistol, but suddenly stayed my hand, for no ghost or robber confronted me, but Guy Shotover.

He was evidently sleep-walking, for he was scantily clothed, and his eyes were turned up, showing me only the whites. I had heard that it was dangerous to wake somnambulists, so lay still, wondering what he would do and what I ought to do.

He stood for a while motionless, then bent over the bed-foot towards me, looking so ghastly with his rolled-up eyes that I drew back and shuddered.

"I must speak," he said, in a low, monotonous voice, only less horrible than the soulless cry of one who is terrified with dreams ; "I must speak. I can keep silence no longer. There is no love without sacrifice. I——"

He ceased speaking, covered his face, and groaned. At the same moment I saw Ruth Shotover standing in the doorway.

"Guy !" she called softly. "Guy !"

He walked slowly towards her and took her outstretched hand.

"He's walking in his sleep," she said. "I heard

his door open and then yours, so I guessed that he had come in here. What did he say to you?"

"Only a few words about being unable to keep silence, or something of the kind."

"Was that all? You mustn't heed what he said. He has the strangest fancies when he's like this. I'm sorry he disturbed you. I shall lock his door on the outside, so it shan't happen again. Come, Guy, come!"

She led him out and shut the door, and I lay for a while thinking of her and her brother, then of her alone, and then I fell asleep and dreamed of her.

The next day I found Guy very penitent at having disturbed me.

"I often walk in my sleep. I should have told you to lock your door."

"You can't be well."

"Oh, indeed, I am quite well," and he laughed rather nervously. "I'm sorry I gave you trouble."

Immediately after breakfast I said good-bye to the brother and sister, promising to visit them at Ewehurst, and started on my journey, reaching Wadhurst that night. Tuesday I spent in preaching in the village and working at Little Pell. On Wednesday I set out again, and at twilight saw the Shoyswell oast-houses against Shoyswell Wood.

CHAPTER VII

OF THE METHODIST AS A LOVER

IT would be useless and impossible for me to describe the warmth of the welcome that awaited me at Shoyswell. I was made to tell the story of my wanderings over and over again, as we sat round the fire after supper, and each recital drew out fresh tokens of sympathy and good-will from Peter and Mary Winde.

My eyes moistened and shone every time I mentioned Ruth Shotover, and I think the Windes must have guessed my love for her ; that is to say, if they had not guessed it before—for I now knew that I had loved her ever since I had first kissed her hand.

"Poor Ruth has been very low-spirited of late," said Mary ; "I am sure that she has something on her mind, but I can't induce her to confide in me. Did she seem dejected at Maresfield ?"

"Not at the farmhouse : she laughed and was in high spirits then ; but in church, where I first saw her, she looked utterly miserable."

"Poor girl ! I wonder what is ailing her—and

her brother, for he often looks as unhappy and anxious as she."

"I believe it's something to do with that fellow Enchmarsh," said Peter; "I can't make out how it is he's always at the Parsonage, or riding with Miss Ruth. He's a man whom every right-minded girl should shun. Even Mary, who sees good in everybody, says that the only virtue she can find in Enchmarsh is that he's a first-rate pistol shot."

I slept that night in the little room where the dried hops still rustled in the wind, and directly after breakfast the next morning I set out for Ewehurst. Ruth was more than usually cordial, and I reached home—I had come by this time to call Shoyswell "home"—in an ecstasy of happiness.

It had been settled that I should stay with the Windes for a week or two before setting out on a second missionary journey, and nearly every day I went to Ewehurst. I came to be regarded as quite an old friend by the Shotovers, and my bliss was complete—or rather, would have been complete but for Squire Enchmarsh, whom I met constantly at the Parsonage. More than once I was tempted to ask Ruth how she could tolerate the continual presence of this man, who treated her brother with undisguised contempt, and herself with a familiarity no less odious. But so closely did she draw the veil over this mystery that it would have been both cruel and presumptuous to try to pluck it away.

About this time my love entered on a new phase. At first I had been satisfied with the mere joy of

loving, and would have been content to love without hope of reward. But now all was changed. My love became hungry, and I sighed romantically and foolishly for a word or a look to tell me that I did not worship in vain. This was no doubt owing to the fact that Ruth had suddenly grown very reserved and shy. She had ceased to chatter and laugh, but spoke primly, and seemed to avoid solitary talks and walks with me. I wondered whether she had discovered my love and was displeased at it, or whether she had come to love me, but was not sure if I returned her passion. I pondered and brooded over these surmises ; I even thought of speaking my love, but as yet reason held my heart in leash, and I was silent.

Thus the days went by till an evening in early June. The wind was soft, and brought the sound of fold-bells from Marsh Quarter ; the red clouds were tossed like burning feathers in the west, and the moon hung above Totease with a star below her nether tip. I had gone for a ramble in the fields, and intended to sup at Ewehurst Parsonage, and walk home under the stars ; the lanes at night bewitched me ; they were favourable to the dreams of young love.

The Parsonage windows shone in the twilight, and the trees in the garden rustled an accompaniment to the songs of sleepy birds. Fat miller-moths fluttered heavily among the evening primroses, and the violet torches of the glow-worms shone like amethysts in the shade of the leaves. I saw Ruth's

shadow against the study blind, and stood for a time watching her while she sewed, and rocked herself as she sewed. A man's shadow leaned over her; she lifted her head, and I knew that she had set her lips invitingly for her brother to kiss. Then another man's shadow came between them; I groaned impatiently, for I recognised Enchmarsh.

I knocked at the door, and Ruth herself opened it. She wore a white dress, babyish, soft, and bunchy, and cuddled a black kitten in her arms. She looked the veriest child, and I realised that she must be even younger than I had hitherto thought her—not more than seventeen.

"Good evening, Mr. Lyte; I'm so vastly glad you've come." I could not tell whether her words were truth or courtesy, for there were tears as well as a smile in her eyes.

Enchmarsh greeted me very superciliously when, a moment later, I entered the study. He never took the slightest pains to conceal his dislike for me, and I know that I might have tried harder to conceal mine. Ruth smiled anxiously at us both, and endeavoured to turn and soften Enchmarsh's sneering and often insolent remarks. Guy hardly ever spoke in the presence of the Squire of Kitchenhour, so supper was rather an ordeal, and I felt glad when it was over. Enchmarsh chose to stay drinking and smoking by himself in the dining-room; Guy went off to his study, and I persuaded Ruth—she seemed strangely unwilling—to stroll out with me into the garden.

The moon was high among the stars, and a nightingale was drowning with his rich wild voice the drowsy twitter of some bird yet awake. We crossed the lawn to the shrubbery, and the roses that tangled the path brushed dew on to our cheeks. The spell of the night was upon us, and neither of us spoke for some time.

"I love the moonlight," I said at last.

"I hate it," said Ruth.

"Why?"

"It seems so cold and cruel; it mocks me. Why do you love it?"

"Because it is like—like——"

"Like what?"

"Like you."

She laughed shrilly.

"How can it be like me?"

"It is so beautiful."

She laughed again.

"Lud! How vastly romantic you are to-night! Is it the moon that makes you so?"

I was silent.

"We'd better go indoors," said Ruth abruptly; "my slippers are quite wet."

I do not know what madness prompted me to ask her to stay.

"Wait a moment, I have something to tell you."

"I—I don't want to hear it." To my horror, I saw that she was in tears.

"Ruth, Ruth, you must hear—I love you!"

We were standing in an open space among some

bushes ; their shadow covered us except for our faces, and I saw Ruth's suddenly become set and white even to the lips. She held her hand over her breast, and swayed back from me.

"Ruth, sweetheart, do not cry. I love you. I——"

My voice died away, for she pushed me from her with a strength I could not have expected in one so frail.

"Go—go ; never speak to me like that again. Go right away——"

She stood for an instant motionless, then turned and dashed through the bushes towards the house. The next moment I heard a rush and a scream. I forced my way after her through the thick euonymus, and suddenly found myself face to face with Enchmarsh.

He stood in the moonlight, and I saw clearly the rage burning in his eyes. In his arms he held an unconscious white mass, gathered up against him as one would hold a baby. The white face was thrown back on his shoulder, so that I could see the look of grief and terror it had not lost in unconsciousness.

A torrent of wrath rose to my lips, but Enchmarsh spoke before I could let it loose.

"What the hell are you about ?"

"What the—what are *you* about ?"

"My business."

"You were eavesdropping."

"I was not. But I heard what you said, because,

in your cursed effrontery, you spoke loud enough for anyone within ten yards to hear."

There was a rustle in the long grass beside me, and I noticed that Guy Shotover stood close at hand, his cheeks flushed and his head held low.

"And what if you did hear?" I cried. "Is not my tongue my own?"

"You deserve to have it torn out of your head for pestering with your worthless love a lady who is as high above you as heaven is above hell."

"You may be thankful that you have her in your arms at this moment; for if you hadn't I should certainly knock you down."

He did not answer, but suddenly bent his head and kissed the pale face upon his shoulder, and not the face only, but the hair and the extended throat.

I sprang towards him, livid with rage.

"You are drunk, you beast! How dare you insult a helpless girl who, if she weren't unconscious and in your power, would rather blow her brains out than let you shame her so! Guy Shotover, haven't you a spark of manliness left, that you can stand by and see your sister treated so infernally?"

The curate made no reply. The moonlight fell upon him, and I saw that he was shaking from head to foot.

"Coward! Fool!" I cried, and turned from him furiously.

"Stop fuming and ranting!" roared Enchmarsh.

"Not while you hold Ruth Shotover in your arms."

"I shall hold her as long as I please, and kiss her as often as I have a mind to. Stand off, you damned psalm-singing gipsy!"

"As her brother will not protect her, I must."

"Her brother knows that I have a right to do as I please."

"What right?"

He curled back his lips in a contemptuous smile.

"Merely the right of a betrothed husband."

"Betrothed husband!"

I echoed his words blankly, wildly, and staggered back from him, my hands over my face. When I drew them away the stars were swinging, the bushes reeling, and Enchmarsh's face leered at me like a devil's through the darkness.

"Yes, Miss Shotover is my promised wife."

"You lie," I cried hoarsely.

"Shotover, do I lie?"

The curate shook his head.

I looked from one to the other in horror. My rage was dead, my flesh crept, and my limbs shook as if with the palsy.

"I—I didn't know. No one told me—I——"

Enchmarsh broke in with a torrent of oaths.

"And why should anyone have told you, you skulking vagabond? Was it any business of yours? damn you! Do you expect to be told all the concerns of your betters, you insolent fool?"

My fury revived and blazed out.

"If it were not for my vocation, I'd call you out for this!" I cried, grinding my teeth.

"I don't fight with tramps, I kick 'em; and I'll kick you if you come nearer. Be off! This girl belongs to me. She's mine, I tell you—be off!" and again he stooped and kissed her cheeks and her mouth, her closed eyelids, and her red hair that streamed over his arm.

I strode up to Shotover and seized him by the wrist.

"You cowardly fool! What devil gives you the power to stand by and see your sister shamed by this villain?"

He turned pale and groaned a little, for in my rage I had nearly wrenched his arm out of its socket.

"Leave Shotover alone!" shouted Enchmarsh.

"Why should you maul him? Ought he to have kept his sister for you? Ought he to have rejected all other suitors and kept her for a hypocritical Methodist mumper, that she might share his rags and starvation by day and his ditch by night? But let me tell you that I loved her months ago, before you had begun to poison her sight with your scowling face, when you were washing out the cow-stalls and being horsewhipped on your father's farm."

How he knew of the miseries and degradations of my boyhood I cannot imagine.

"Be off now," continued Enchmarsh, "and don't let me ever see you at Ewehurst Parsonage again."

"The Parsonage is not yours, and I'll not leave it for you."

"Order him off, Shotover."

The curate came forward.

"I'm not going until I've spoken to Ruth," I cried frantically. "I believe that what you have told me is a lie, and that Shotover is only swearing to it because he's afraid of you."

"You may speak to her if you like," sneered Enchmarsh. "Look, she is recovering consciousness."

The limp arm stirred, the head writhed on its support. Her eyes opened, and a quick glance of fear shot into them; her lips parted in horror. She evidently remembered all that had passed.

"Ruth," said Enchmarsh, "are you my promised wife?"

Her dilated eyes looked wildly into mine.

"My darling! My darling!" I cried, unmanned and nearly weeping, "tell me that it is a lie."

"It is true," she said. That was all.

Enchmarsh caught her to him with a loud laugh. "She's mine—aren't you, Ruth? She loves me—don't you, Ruth? Be off, you tramp; your game is up. Order him off, Shotover."

He caught Ruth to his breast once more, and kissed her; then carried her triumphantly away.

Guy came timidly up to where I stood, speechless and paralysed, and touched my arm. I shook him off with such violence that he went reeling backwards among the bushes. Then I turned and rushed away.

I ran wildly through the shrubbery, tearing my clothes and my flesh among the brakes, often in my

blind fury dashing up against a tree, then speeding on afresh, reckless of bruises and pain. At last I came to a fence, and vaulted it without pausing to see what was on the other side. I did not spring high enough, my foot struck against a stake, and I fell headlong.

I rolled over among a mass of dead leaves, which the violence of my fall sent whirling and fluttering round me. Then down I shot for about fifty feet, among stones, leaves, and clods of earth, now my head, now my feet foremost, clutching in vain at every twig and stone, my breath all but dashed out of my body. At last I reached the bottom, and lay battered, shaken, gasping, and bleeding, among the stones of a stream which wound along the foot of the hollow, and which, owing to recent drought, was nearly dry.

The trickle of cold water under my head revived me, and I staggered to my feet, feeling very sick, and almost unable to stand. I wondered how I should ever reach home. I was at the foot of one of those glens or "hatches" that every now and then break the peace of the Sussex fields. It was thickly grown with brushwood, but on one side this had been cut away—hence the fruitlessness of my efforts to break my fall. On the further side hazel, ash, and sallow rose almost precipitously, and I despaired of being able, bruised and shaken as I was, to climb out of the stuffy darkness of the hatch into the wind and moonlight above.

However, there was nothing else to be done, so

I made the attempt, and toiled upwards on my hands and knees for nearly half an hour. Every moment was agony, and I was covered with sweat by the time I reached the top and found myself in a field where the breeze was rippling the grass into silver moon-shot waves. I threw myself down, and lay there for fully an hour, with the buttercups stretching their Eldorado to where the fold-star hung and trembled. Now and then I writhed, and tore the young grass with my hands and teeth, but it was not bodily pain which caused my throes.

"Betrothed to Enchmarsh!" I cried the words aloud to the mocking wind and sky. How he would make her suffer! He would beat her, perhaps—had I not seen him flog his horse, and kick his dog lame? Oh, how I loved her! Every minute seemed to double the intensity of my love, and to make it doubly passionate, doubly tender, doubly wild, and doubly torturing. If a good man had won her from me I could have borne it, "but not Enchmarsh!" I cried, as I rolled in the rustling grass, "not Enchmarsh! Oh, my God!" I did not for a moment think that Ruth loved this fellow. The idea was foolish and impossible. Again and again I had seen her eyes glow with contempt, dislike, and even horror, when he was near. No, no, no! She did not love him; there was some devilish mystery which I could not fathom. Perhaps the curate was in Enchmarsh's debt. I had heard of women being sold to pay debts.

The night wore on; the moon had set, and a chill

mist had risen. I shivered and struggled to my feet, to toil homewards through the rank wet fields, where the grass reached almost to my knees. At last I stood in Shoyswell fold.

The windows were dark ; not a soul was stirring ; but I found the kitchen window unfastened, and climbed in. The last red gleeds still smouldered on the hearth, and I crouched down before them, for I was trembling with cold. My rage had died suddenly and completely, and in its place reigned a dumb and stony grief. I did not care to go to bed, for I knew that sleep would be impossible. So I crouched there, while the dawn crept grey and quivering into the room, and the wind tossed the trees with a hissing, moaning sound.

CHAPTER VIII

OF THE METHODIST'S JOURNEY INTO THE DENS OF KENT

THE sun had just risen between the oasts, and the morning wind was beginning to play with the heavy damp hair on my forehead when Peter came into the room.

"What, lad ! you here ? I thought you must be spending the night at Ewehurst. When did you come back ?"

"About midnight."

"Then why aren't you in bed ? Those who don't lie down till midnight shouldn't rise at four."

"I—I haven't been to bed."

I was crouched in the shadow of the settle, and he could see me only dimly, but a movement of mine brought the light on to my face, and he started back with an exclamation of horror.

"Humphrey—where have you been ?"

"Only to Ewehurst," I muttered, not realising the plight I was in. He took me by the arm, and pulled me up from my knees.

"What—good God !"

"I—I had a fall. But I'm right enough."

"Look in the glass before you try to deceive me further."

He dragged me to the mirror, and I saw that my face and neck were scratched and cut and blood-stained, and that my hair was matted with blood. But it was the expression of my face that made it look so changed and dreadful. My eyes were wild and bloodshot, my brows drawn and furrowed, and my whole countenance was lined as if I had grown suddenly to old age. I drew back and covered my eyes.

"Lad," said Peter searchingly, "what's the matter?"

"Nothing."

"That's not true. But there! I mustn't scold you. You're not used to confiding your troubles."

I went to the window and looked out. Peter came behind me and touched my shoulder.

"Won't you tell me, lad?"

"I—I don't know."

"I think you would feel better if you did."

I was silent for a few moments; then I said slowly:

"Ruth Shotover is engaged to Enchmarsh of Kitchenhour."

Peter started back.

"That can't be true!"

"It is true—as God's wrath."

"This is dreadful news."

"It's damnable!" I cried, swinging round upon

him, my hands clenched above my head. "It's damnable ! it's hellish ! Oh, damn him ! He's——"

"Lad ! lad !" cried Peter.

"Forgive me. I'm half crazy. The Methodist is lost in——"

"The lover," said Peter quietly.

"How did you know ?"

"It was an open secret, Humphrey."

"You will keep it ?"

"On my honour, I will. But some one else knows it, lad."

"Who ?"

"Mary."

I had thought as much.

Peter went over to the settle, and beckoned me to him ; and before I had been very long kneeling at his feet, I found the story of my foolish declaration of love, Ruth's terror, Enchmarsh's rage, and my own madness, slipping from my tongue. Peter waited patiently till I had finished the miserable tale, and had thrown myself upon the floor. Then he said :

"Humphrey, is this the way you bear the chastening of the Lord ?"

"I can't bear it any other way. I'm mad."

"You're mad with rage. I never met a fellow with a temper like yours, my lad. It ill becomes a Methodist."

I hung my head.

"I can understand and sympathise with your heartbreak, but you're more furious than heart-broken."

"Because I'm sure there is foul play somewhere. Ruth doesn't love that scoundrel. I know she doesn't."

"I must confess that matters don't look quite straight. But we can do nothing, dear lad—nothing but pray, and rage won't help our prayers."

He talked on, and gradually I became calm and humble and bitterly ashamed. I saw how foolish and self-degrading my rage had been, and how that patience under bitterest suffering is "a most commendable and manly thing."

At last the clock struck six, and I heard Mary Winde's step on the stairs.

"I had better go to my room, sir. I'm not fit to meet Mary just now."

He nodded, so I went up, and washed, and changed my clothes. After which I looked a little more presentable, but still very ghastly, with my scratched and bruised face, and my eyes blurred with sleeplessness.

Peter had prepared Mary for my plight, so when I came down an hour later she did not start or draw back from me, but came to meet me with the winning smile and outstretched hand of other days. There was no mention made during breakfast of what had happened at Ewehurst Parsonage. The father and daughter spoke of farming matters, the country, books, and preaching, changing their topic every other minute in a vain hope to interest me. I felt too sick to eat, and rose after having done little more than taste my food. I forget how the

"But you must go, lad. You yourself say so."

"Yes, I must—but God help me!"

He took my arm, and we walked down to the bank of the Limden Stream. There Peter talked with me for fully an hour, and we mapped out my immediate future.

I was to go into Kent, and travel through those towns and villages, the names of which all end in "den"—Rolvenden, Benenden, Biddenden, Horsemonden, Bethersden—and northwards to the flat chalk-lands by Rochester and Chatham. Then I was to cross the mouth of the Thames into Essex, and on into Suffolk and Norfolk. I was not to come back till I had learned to suffer in silence, to think of Ruth without wincing, and to bear my loneliness. I felt that these things would never be, and that in setting out to wander till I attained them, I set out to wander till I died.

"And when shall you start?" asked Peter.

"This evening. I shall walk all night, then fall down and sleep from exhaustion—that is the only way I can hope to sleep."

"You shall do as you please. But don't be faint-hearted. Many a man before you has borne your burden, and borne it singing."

"Perhaps I shall sing one day—when I know that she is dead and out of that villain's power. Oh, believe me that it is the thought of her suffering that makes my own so awful."

"Perhaps, poor lad, she's not suffering so cruelly as you think. She must know the fellow's character,

seeing that he's her familiar friend ; but she may be captivated by his good looks, or by that careless dashing manner of his."

"I know she is miserable. She does not love him ; and he will ill-use her—flog her when he is angry, as he flogs his horse and his dogs."

"It may be so. But she's acting with her eyes open. She knows Enchmarsh even better than we do. We can't interfere with her, lad."

"I know that, so I had better go away to where every lane and field does not bring me a memory of her."

The rain had ceased, and the sun had risen higher ; the fires in the east flamed no longer, only smouldered, and Peter and I, still talking, sauntered home. Mary and breakfast were awaiting us in the kitchen, and while we ate the latter, we told the former of my plans.

She showed little more surprise than her father when she heard of my resolution to leave Sussex. Only, I thought, she seemed more grieved at it than he.

"We shall miss you, Humphrey," she said simply.

"And I shall miss Shoyswell, and the happy home-life there. You have both been so good to me. I believe I should have killed myself when I was a little lad, if it hadn't been for your kindness."

"Killed yourself ! What nonsense !" cried Peter.

"You loved God, and a man who loves God will never throw His best gift back in His face. Lad, go through life with a song on your lips and a prayer

in your heart, and doubt not but that the song will gladden your brethren and the prayer go straight to your Father."

That evening I made up my few possessions into a bundle, Peter insisting on renewing his loan of five pounds, and I found that Mary had spent the last month in making me some shirts and handkerchiefs. My dear friends did not accompany me, as before, to the end of Shoyswell Lane, but said good-bye to me in the kitchen. Mary cried a little, and for the second time I thought of kissing her, and for the second time her look and my own heart forbade it. The kitchen was red with fire-light when I passed the window, and I thought of the evening when I had first come to Shoyswell, and had looked in and seen the two Windes and John Palehouse at the table.

At the end of the lane I paused and glanced back. A ribbon of smoke was rising against the dim sky, and the trees were tossing their branches against a square of red light. I groaned, and bowed my head over my clasped hands as I prayed for Peter and Mary.

Then I went on through the listening night, past Iridge and Bodiam, to where I could see the glint of the moon mingling with the sullen red of the sunset on the Rother. I had left the Sussex fields, and stood on the Sussex marshes. The wind swept moaning through the osiers, and the river moaned. The sunset died as I came to Merstham, and a thousand stars shone among the clouds in the

mirror of the overflow. One can ford the Rother at low tide near Ethnam, and from the ford one can see the lights of Ewehurst. I saw them through a mist of tears, and as I stood on the great lonely marsh, a passionate longing gripped me to see Ruth's face. But I fought it down, and stepped into the Rother.

The water at mid-stream came nearly to my waist, and when I saw that another step would bring me into Kent—for the Rother at this point is one with the Kent ditch, and a boundary line between the counties—I stood still, and gazed back at the huddling mass of marsh, field, wood, and waste towards the south. Farewell, Sussex!—my mother, my nurse, my mistress, my home, my goodly heritage! I stood mid-stream, with clasped hands, while the water, sprinkled with mirrored stars, eddied moaning round me. Then I waved my hand to the southward country, and scrambled on to the Kentish bank.

The wind blew fiercely in my face, and tossed the great clouds like feathers about the sky. Turning my back resolutely on the county I loved, I walked to some little houses known as Ethnam, the lights of which I had often seen from the Sussex marsh on my rambles to and from Ewehurst. Here I left the levels and came on to the Kentish weald.

My heart ached madly as I strode on between the hedges, seen dimly through a waving mist of hemlock, chervil, and burnet. I had never longed so desperately for Ruth. I was like a man struck

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mirror of the overflow. One can ford the Rother at low tide near Ethnam, and from the ford one can see the lights of Ewehurst. I saw them through a mist of tears, and as I stood on the great lonely marsh, a passionate longing gripped me to see Ruth's face. But I fought it down, and stepped into the Rother.

The water at mid-stream came nearly to my waist, and when I saw that another step would bring me into Kent—for the Rother at this point is one with the Kent ditch, and a boundary line between the counties—I stood still, and gazed back at the huddling mass of marsh, field, wood, and waste towards the south. Farewell, Sussex!—my mother, my nurse, my mistress, my home, my goodly heritage! I stood mid-stream, with clasped hands, while the water, sprinkled with mirrored stars, eddied moaning round me. Then I waved my hand to the southward country, and scrambled on to the Kentish bank.

The wind blew fiercely in my face, and tossed the great clouds like feathers about the sky. Turning my back resolutely on the county I loved, I walked to some little houses known as Ethnam, the lights of which I had often seen from the Sussex marsh on my rambles to and from Ewehurst. Here I left the levels and came on to the Kentish weald.

My heart ached madly as I strode on between the hedges, seen dimly through a waving mist of hemlock, chervil, and burnet. I had never longed so desperately for Ruth. I was like a man struck

blind and crying for the light. My past happiness lay behind me, like the shores of some blessed isle, at which my craft had touched for a moment, but from which it had been rudely driven for ever.

The night deepened ; the water-bearer had risen, and quivered over Udiam. Charles's Wain hung just above my head, and cast a faint light on my way. The mist came trailing over the fallows, and it seemed as if the vapour took strange shapes. Now two white girls danced across the grass ; then I saw a great lamb standing against the woods of Mockbeggar, which melted into a horse without a head, which in its turn changed into a snow-white bird, that flew with outspread wings into the face of the moon.

I was weak and weary from want of sleep, and I longed to throw myself down and forget my sorrows, if only for an hour. There was a gap in the hedge on my right, and through it I saw the great umbelliferæ waving. I crept into the field, and lay down where a tangle of bramble and bryony shut out the keen little wind that blew up from the Rother. The blessed sleep came almost immediately, born of exhaustion and sorrow. I slept for sorrow. No dreams disturbed my rest, but I woke at intervals during the night, stirred, then slept again. At last a rustle in the grass made me start up fully awake. The dawn lay, a rosy infant, on the breast of the east, and a flock of sheep, their fleeces tinged with rose towards the sunrise, stood a few yards off, staring at me with silly, frightened

faces. They scampered away as I raised myself on my elbow, and buried their noses in the rich grass higher up the pasture.

There was a freshness in the air that quickened my blood, and as the sun rose grandly behind the eastern meadows, and the glory of the young day grew more and more dazzling, submission came to my heart, and, kneeling among the spurge, I prayed God to give me strength to endure. Then a robin sang—my little bird of hope.

CHAPTER IX

OF THE METHODIST AT THE VILLAGE OF ROLVENDEN

I PREACHED that morning at Sandhurst, and, buying two rolls and a cake of gingerbread—of which I am very fond—ate them in a wood by the Hexden Channel, then walked to the neighbouring village of Hawkhurst. I preached there, and at Highgate, and towards evening found work on a farmhouse known as Mopesden.

I was at this time painfully learning the lesson of resignation, and I felt that my will would be more easily brought in tune with God's if I mortified it by healthy labour. There is nothing like hard work for crushing rebellion. When our bodies are tired, our minds, as it were, grow tired too, and cease to struggle against Heaven ; and when we are doing with all our might whatsoever our hand findeth to do, our mind has little time for dwelling on its miseries. I therefore decided to stay a week at Mopesden Farm, and, finding the people kindly and the work congenial, did not repent my decision.

One night, after supper, when I was sitting with

the other farm-hands by the kitchen fire, the farmer's wife came in after a ride to Sandhurst market.

"A strange day we've had, the maaster and I!" she exclaimed. "There's bin a feller preaching in the market-pläace till it seemed as if the very stöans and tiles must be listening to un."

"What?" I cried with interest.

"Oh, he wur a just about grand speaker, and a Methodee, like yourself. He spöake better than you, lad. But döan't 'ee be downhearted; I reckon as he can't mow or stack half as well."

"What was he like?"

"Oh, a tall, slim chap, youngish, but with grey hair."

"Where did he come from?"

"How many more questions, young feller? He came from Sussex and from Hampshire, I heerd tell."

"Why, that must be the man who went before me when I preached in Sussex! Where has he gone?"

"On to Rolvenden and Benenden, I b'lieve. I'm unaccountable glad he's a-gone, for he spöake of hell and death and judgment in a way that mäade one tremble. But let's have no more of un—and to bed with you, lad, for you must be up rath the morrer for the stacking of Yattendén's field, surelye!"

My week of service came to an end a day or two later, and refusing the good farmer's offer for a permanent place at Mopesden Farm, I again set

out on my wanderings. I had several reasons for starting thus. I felt that Highgate was too near Sussex for my peace of mind—one can see Ewehurst from Four Throws, close to the village—and continued sleeplessness had so sapped my health that I was physically unfitted for the hard work at Mopesden. I felt also that I had no right to remain in one place, when it was my mission to carry the Saving Word through the length and breadth of England. My fourth reason was perhaps the weakest—I wished to make up with the Greater Preacher who went before. I thirsted for company of my own age, condition, and faith, and I believed that I should find it in this mysterious Chrysostom, the track of whose conquests I was following for the second time.

I decided to go to Rolvenden by the shortest way—up and down and in and out of a multitude of twisting lanes, where the rose-crowned battlements of the hedges shut out everything but the sky; through fields, where the hay lay mown in great swathes, or where the green corn preached the Resurrection; through woods where every step caused a flutter among the wild creatures that played in the mush of dead leaves; by hanger and bostal, hurst and hatch, cottages and farmhouses, hop-fields, glorious in their summer dress, orchards from which the blossom had withered, and where the shrivelled fruits hung like ruddy fungi among the leaves; through the young fresh morning, till drowsy noon, when, as the sheep gathered on the

shady side of the hedges, and the cattle panted knee-deep in the meadow streams, I came to Rolvenden.

The village was half asleep. The bow-pranked team dozed outside the tavern, where the waggoners were nodding over their ale. The old men slumbered on the benches by the inn porch, the women sat idly in their doorways, the children slept in the scanty patches of shade. It was not an encouraging audience, but I resolved to speak, and soon gathered a little crowd round me by the churchyard gate. I think that since the great sorrow of my life had fallen upon me, I had preached with far more eloquence and power. I had noticed that at Sandhurst, Hawkhurst, and Highgate, my sermons had gone deeper into the people's hearts than at Wadhurst, Cuckfield, or Cowfold, when I was happy and the world smiled. This day at Rolvenden the sleepy, sordid men and women listened to me almost eagerly. There was no laughing or interrupting, so I gained confidence, and spoke and pleaded with them as I had never spoken or pleaded before. A chapter from Thomas à Kempis came into my mind—"Of the want of all comfort"—and I chose it for my text. For more than an hour I preached of the broken heart, and of the bleeding Hand which alone can bind it. At last I ceased, and at the same moment a voice at my elbow cried out: "Well done!"

I started, and looked for the speaker among the crowd of smocks and stolid faces. The next moment I started again, for by my side stood John Palehouse!

He had altered very little since I had last seen him—five years ago, for though he had occasionally visited Shoyswell since then, I had never met him. His hair was streaked with grey, it is true, and he looked thinner and frailer than of old ; but the face was the same, with the eyes that shone as if they had once seen the Beatific Vision, and had not forgotten it, and the smile so sad and so wonderfully sweet. He was literally in rags. His shoes were ripped in a dozen places, his shoulder showed through his sleeve, and his neck was bare.

“Well done, lad !” he exclaimed, holding out his hand. “I thank God to meet you thus.”

“And I am glad as well as surprised to meet you, Mr. Palehouse. I had no idea that you were in these parts.”

“I have only just come into Kent. I have been through Sussex to Hampshire, then back through Sussex to Shoyswell, where I spent a day or two on my way to Kent. Peter Winde told me that the Lord had called you to preach His Gospel, and that you had gone into the sister county before me.”

“Why !” I exclaimed, as the truth dawned on me, “you must be the Greater Preacher !”

“The what ?”

“The preacher who went before me through Sussex, and went again before me through Kent. You passed me while I worked on Mopesden Farm. When did you reach this village ?”

“The day before yesterday. I have been nursing

a sick boy down at a place called Lambstand on the marshes. A vile hole ! The child will die."

"I am so glad that you are the preacher whose praises have been dinned into my ears on every village green. You don't know how I have longed to make up with you and talk to one of my own condition and persuasion."

"Stay with me for a while at Rolvenden, and we can talk of Shoyswell and of the labours we have undertaken for the Lord."

"Gladly !" I answered, and we made our way through the crowd to the village inn, where I called for a jug of beer, for I was thirsty after my walk in the dust and heat. Palehouse refused to drink beer, but asked the landlady to bring him a cup of spring water. I ordered some bread and cheese, and when the woman had left the room to fetch it, my companion said :

"I don't think that I should stay here. I have no money, and though I know that Mrs. Edwardes would be quite willing not to charge me for the bread and cheese, I don't think I should let her be so good-natured. I shall wait for you outside."

"Pray do not go !" I cried. "I ordered the bread and cheese for both of us, and should be sorry to eat it alone."

"Why should I presume on your kindness more than on the landlady's ? You must not spend your money on me."

"I spend it for selfish reasons. I hate a solitary meal."

to give me a meal, she would never take money from me again. These poor folk are often too generous. Again and again a man and his wife would have turned out of their bed that I might lie there, and the very children on their way to school have offered me their breakfasts when they knew I was hungry."

"You are known in these parts?"

"Oh yes! I constantly go over my ground confirming weak souls. I have many friends in the southern counties. But come, we mustn't loiter here. Off we go to Lambstand!"

I paid the landlady, and we left the alehouse. The sun had lost his noonday heat, and the cool of late afternoon was in the air. John Palehouse sniffed at the little wind that blew from the west.

"Do you smell the hay? They have cut it in Freezingham meadow."

Lover of Nature though I was, I had not noticed the faint delicious smell till he called my attention to it, and during the whole of our walk it was the same. He saw sights and heard sounds to which I was blind and deaf, and every now and then he would ask me if I did not smell the young hops, or the fennel by the wayside, and I would be obliged to answer that I had never noticed their fragrance. As we went along he talked of the birds, the stars, the rain, and the rustling leaves of the woods. He paused to admire stretches of fallow or cornfield, the windings of a stream, the cobalt of a pillar of smoke against the ultramarine of the sky, the red

roofs of the farmsteads against the green of their orchards. John Palehouse had two loves—God and Nature, and two books, the Bible and the green earth.

We went into the garden of Sparkeswood Farm, where the farmer's wife picked us some gooseberries. Half a dozen children trod on our heels, and prattled to John Palehouse. The old shepherd wrinkled up his face with smiles when John's rags fluttered into the fold. The dairy-maids curtsyed and grinned, and the plough-boy was with difficulty sent back to his team. I felt that this was indeed a Greater Preacher.

We set out again on our way, and leaving the road, struck across the fields to where the Rother wound through grey-green marshes. My heart leapt at the sight of old Sussex on the opposite shore. But we were several miles east of Ewehurst, and I looked in vain for the red roofs with the lichen-yellowed spire rising in their midst. I saw Methersham and Reedbed in a golden haze, and beyond them a mass of fields undulating to the south.

Lambstand was a desolate cottage on the edge of the marsh. There was a field behind it, with all attempts at cultivation choked by the rank marsh-weeds that sprang up from the soil. The walls of the cottage were blotched with damp, and huge fungi projected their fat lips from between the clods of which it was built.

There were two rooms inside. The first was filled with smoke ; from the second came a sick child's cry.

We went in and found a boy of about eight years old tossing on a wretched bed. There were two other beds in the room, and these had not been made that day. The heat was terrible, and the boy's thirst was aggravated by the distant gurgle and suck of the Rother on Maytham weir.

"Water," he moaned, for the cup at his side was empty, and had evidently long been so.

"I have something better than water for you, Dickie," said Palehouse tenderly, and crushed the fruit against the dry lips.

I watched him in admiration. It was wonderful how he brought peace and refreshment into that stifling room. He smoothed the tumbled pillow and bedclothes while he spoke low and tenderly to the child. He brushed back the hair from his forehead and bathed his little hot hands.

"Where's Mrs. Ades?" he asked, when he had finished his ministrations.

"She's a-gone to cook her man's supper. He came home early and flew into a mad rage when he found her here. He beat her, he did—oh, Mus' Pal'us, my head, my head!"

He tossed and writhed in his hot bedclothes, and John took him in his arms, and walked with him up and down the room.

"I should not have left you, poor babe. But I was obliged to visit old Mrs. Harting up at the village, and I wanted to get you some fruit, my poor dear."

He rocked the boy in his arms, and sang to him gently till the flushed eyelids closed. I heard foot-

steps in the mud outside the house, and a babel of voices. The next moment four lads and a girl rushed in, but stopped and drew back at the sight of John Palehouse and his burden.

"Is Dickie anybetter, Mus' Pal'us?" asked the girl.

"I'm afraid that he's in a bad way. Where are his father and mother?"

"Father's a-gone to the Fightin' Cocks to drink good luck to the hay-harvest. Mummy's jest a-loiterin'. Surely!"

"One of you lads go and give her your arm," cried Palehouse; "you know that she is tired and ill. For shame to have left her!"

Again I marvelled, for at these few words from this frail man, the great uncouth lads darted off all four out of the cottage. The girl went into the kitchen to coax the smoky fire, and John laid Dickie back on his bed—or rather, the bed he shared with two of his brothers.

The twilight fell, the stars shone, vapours laden with fever and ague steamed up from the marsh, and the gurgle of the Rother swelled to a moan as the tide rose. The boy lay very still, and the girl moved very softly in the next room. Again there were footsteps in the mud, and one of the lads entered, with a pale woman, her eyes bright with approaching maternity, leaning on his arm. She broke from him and ran to the bedside.

"Dickie! Dickie! Speak to me, my babe!"—and she fell on her knees and laid her cheek against his wasted hand.

"Mummy."

"I've brought yer some flowers, darlin'. I picked 'em in the lane—hemlock, vetch, willow-herb, and champions." She laid the bunch, the stalks hot with the clasp of her hot hands, on the pillow, beside his head.

"Dōan't yer remember how yer and me used to pick 'em in Ox Lane, darlin'."

"I remember. Ain't they justabout fine? We'll pick some more, mummy, when I'm waal."

His head rolled sideways on the pillow, so that his cheek fell on the flowers and crushed them. He was dead.

She threw herself across him, sobbing, and praying God to give her back her son. Her sorrow did not tear her long, for that night her child was born, and she joined little Dickie at cockcrow.

The episode of the sick boy at Lambstand gave me further insight into the character of John Palehouse, and made me understand more clearly why the poor folk loved him so. He and I lay that night in a barn near Wassall, and talked till the Water-bearer set behind Great Job's Cross. John told me about his visit to Shywell and Peter and Mary Winde.

"When do you go back to Sussex?"

"I don't know."

"Where are you going?"

"Oh, on to Essex, Suffolk, anywhere,"

"I have been thinking," said John Palehouse, "what if we went together!"

"I should dearly love to go with you. I am very lonely sometimes."

"Then let us go. It is not good for man to be alone."

He leaned towards me in the hay which was our bed, and held out his hand.

"There is my hand in covenant."

"And there is mine. I shall be a better man for your friendship, John Palehouse."

We did not talk any more that night, but lay back in the hay and fell asleep. I dreamed once more that I was wandering along endless lanes, and suddenly I became aware that Ruth was in front of me. I did not see her, but I knew that she went on before me. I followed her, calling, but not her name, for I could not utter it. I found myself calling, "Dorothy! Dorothy!" till at last I woke with that same cry of "Dorothy!" in my ears. John Palehouse lay beside me, his arms tossed above his head, his face white and damp, as if in deadly sorrow, while he cried, in the choked voice of one dreaming a horrible dream, "Dorothy! Dorothy! Dorothy!"

I thought it an act of mercy to wake him, and did so. He sat up, still calling "Dorothy!" then gazed bewildered round him, and at the bar of yellow that crossed the eastern sky through the barn-door.

"I've been dreaming. What is it? Did I call out?"

"Yes!"

"A woman's name?"

"Yes."

He took up a handful of hay and bit and tore it with his teeth. Then he threw himself down on his face.

"John," I cried, patting his shoulder, "what sorrow is this, my poor fellow?"

"I'll tell you another time, perhaps—but not now, for the wound is raw. Go to sleep—as for me, I will get me to my God."

He went to the barn-door and knelt to pray with the morning dusk upon his face.

CHAPTER X

OF THE METHODIST AT THE VILLAGE OF TENTERDEN

THAT same day John Palehouse and I found work on Elphee's Farm, for my funds were reduced to sixpence. I was then confirmed in my opinion that, though my friend was a wonderful preacher, he was a vile labourer. Not that he was unwilling or shirking—in fact, at the end of the day he was twice as exhausted as I, who had done twice as much—but he was intensely unpractical and absent-minded, extraordinarily ignorant—there was a rumour, implicitly believed at Elphee's Farm, that "Mus' Pal'us had once axed Maaster Doolish by which end he shud 'öald he's scythe"—and had an unlucky habit of deserting his own work to help the women and children with theirs. The result of this incapability was that even the farmers who loved and respected him most thought twice before giving him work on their farms; and in consequence his clothes were always in rags, and his pocket and stomach generally empty.

But though at Elphee's Farm I deplored John's

helplessness in field and fold, at Benenden, a village we reached the next morning, I was struck dumb with wonder and admiration at his preaching. The words of the farmer's wife at Mopesden were true : it seemed as if the very stones and tiles must be listening to him. I had heard him speak before, in the kitchen at Shoyswell ; but, in the open air, the breeze buffeting his face, and the clouds sailing above his head, his words were steeped in a new eloquence. It was as if they had borrowed strength from the wind that blew his hair across his cheek, swiftness from the birds that cleft the blue air over the tree-tops, fierceness from the thunder that rumbled sulkily behind the barrows of Swattenden. He was not a soft preacher. Though he himself was mild and tender as a woman, his sermons were stern, rugged, and ruthless as a storm. He spoke of death, hell, and judgment, where I had spoken of Christ and endless life ; he warned where I had pleaded ; he drove with fear of hell, where I had enticed with hope of heaven. He was not a Calvinist, but his creed contained an article—"There are few that can be saved."

In many other ways, besides in power and fierceness, his preaching differed from mine. Though in ordinary speech his language was that of an educated man, his sermons were full of rough, ill-chosen words and expressions, borrowed from the uncultured peasantry he addressed. Moreover, he loved to dwell on Old Testament scenes and characters, whereas I had spoken chiefly of the New : I had

preached God as the Father, loving and beloved, showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments ; John Palehouse spoke of Him as Jehovah, mighty and to be feared, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

I was struck, also, by another characteristic of John's preaching—namely, the effect it produced on his hearers. Men had listened to me with stolid, unmoved faces ; sometimes they had openly jeered. When John preached no one jeered, and every one was moved, even excited. The tears fell down the women's cheeks, the men's faces worked and twitched with their emotion. The silence was a silence of bated breath, broken only by the rush and sough of the wind up the street, and the mutter of distant thunder. John spoke for two hours of wrath and judgment, then suddenly ceased, came down from the cart where he stood, and was no longer the fierce and ruthless prophet, with his message of fear, but the mild and tender brother who had nursed a sick child at Lambstand, and bore a message of love.

"John," I cried, as he came to me through the silent and motionless crowd, "your life and your gospel ill agree."

"My conversation is not all that I could wish, friend, and as for my Gospel, it is given me of the Lord ; yea, woe is me if I preach not the Gospel."

"Gospel means good news—why do you speak of death and hell ?"

"Because I would have folk flee from the wrath to come, when He shall shake earth and also heaven."

He bowed his head and seemed greatly exercised in his mind. I thought it best to say no more for a time, so took his arm and led him to the outskirts of the crowd. Here he shook off some of his depression, and insisted on returning and greeting his friends among the throng of smocks and print aprons. His friends seemed numberless, and he greeted them all. He inquired after sick husbands and children, after black sheep that disturbed the home fold, and after lost sheep that had deserted it. The people had trembled at his preaching, but they evidently realised that the preacher and the man in him were two different personalities. Women brought him their children, and he kissed them and patted their heads; the young men told him of their work in field and barn; the young women spoke of their sweethearts, and some of an approaching marriage-day. He chatted with the yokels and with the old men, who held out shaking hands to clasp his. He joked with the young labourer and his pretty wife; he comforted the mother whose son had run away to sea; he cheered the desponding lover; he had kindness, smiles, and sympathy for all. Towards evening John and I left Benenden for Tenterden. We did not take the shortest road, but walked as far as a cross-roads known as the Brogues, in a field near which we passed the night. The next day at sunrise John visited the tenant of an old farm called Rat's Castle, and also some

cottages at the hamlet of Castwisell. Wherever he went he was welcome, and we breakfasted at Rat's Castle off bread and cheese, cherries and curds.

It was still fairly early when we reached Tenterden, a little market-town in the midst of the hop-gardens of Kent. The sun lay hot on the cobbles of the High Street, and on the steep roofs of the houses, above which rose the church-tower, buttressed and crocketed.

"I am hot and tired," said Palehouse, when we entered the village, "and so are you, lad. Let us put off our prophesying till the afternoon, and rest till then in the cool wind."

"I'm sure I should like that, for my eyes and throat are full of dust. Where shall we go?"

John pointed to the tower of old St. Mildred's, round which the swallows were wheeling. "Right up to where not even a tree can screen us from God's wind."

I readily agreed, and we went to the church. It was locked, but John knew where to find the key, and we were soon in the cold aisles, with the smell that haunts damp old churches in our nostrils.

Tenterden Church was ill-kept, dirty, and dark, with cattle-pen pews, a hideous three-decker pulpit, and a neglected sanctuary. John Palehouse sighed, but knelt down to pray in a pew near the door, and I knelt beside him. A few minutes later we rose, unlocked the tower-door, and went up a dark, twisting flight of steps to another door, which opened out on to the leads at the top of the steeple.

The wind blew on us, rich with the scent of hay-fields. John and I sat down on the parapet, and gazed over the giddy brink at the red roofs swarming below. All round us lay the wonderfully contrasted yet wonderfully blended colours of the weald—red and yellow farmhouses, with their white-capped oasts and black barns, emerald pastures, olive-green hopfields, green-bice woods nearly black, glorious variegated patches of garden, brown and purple commons, where the gorse-fires flared, and above all the blue sky, across which the clouds were scudding. Due south stretched a strip of apple-green, with a blue ribbon winding along the centre. It was the Rother Marsh, with the Rother. And on the further side huddled the fields and woods of Sussex. It seemed as if I could never escape from the county of my birth and love and sorrow. I saw her meadows and marshes from every hill-top, and each sight brought the intensest longing.

John and I sat silently, and feasted our eyes on the green beauty below and the blue beauty above us, while the wind cooled our hot necks and faces, and the throbbing in our tired limbs died gradually. At last John spoke.

"This is a glorious spot. We look down on the world, and yet are not of the world ; we see its loveliness and are spared its dust and heat. This is an ideal place for——"

"For what ?" I asked, as he hesitated.

"For confidences, lad."

He touched my hand and smiled.

"I am fond of you," he said simply.

"How can I help you, John?"

"By listening to me—I should like to tell you about—about—Dorothy."

I flushed with pleasure. Short as the time of our comradeship had been, I had become much attached to John Palehouse, and was deeply touched by this token of his love and confidence.

"Yes, lad. I decided last night that I would tell you when I had opportunity. A sorrow loses half its bitterness when told to a friend, and you are my friend, Humphrey. I have not known you long, but I have grown to care for you more than I ever cared for any man, so I shall tell you what I never told any man."

"Not Peter Winde?"

"Not even Peter, though I love him dearly and trust him implicitly. I don't know why I feel so drawn to you. Perhaps it is because we are fairly of an age, because we are working together in God's vineyard, because we have shared bed and board—the stream-side stone our board, the field our bed—or because we are both wanderers and have lost or estranged our kith and kin. But, be the reason what it may, I am fond of you, and would feel much relief in telling you what I have never told any man."

"Tell me, then, John. I wish that I could help you."

"You cannot help me except by your sympathy. You cannot bring the dead to life. But your sympathy will be help indeed."

He was silent a moment, and sat swinging his legs against the parapet, gazing at the roofs beneath. At last he lifted up his head and spoke.

"You may be surprised to hear that my father was a gentleman of wealth and position, and my mother a high-born lady."

"I'm not surprised. I always thought you were of good birth."

"In spite of my rags and vagabond ways? Come, now, you will surely be surprised to hear that I have been well educated?"

"I—I don't think I am—but——"

"You may well stammer and falter; there are few traces of my education left. I have not opened a book, except this"—and he touched the Bible in the ragged bosom of his shirt—"for years, and I have forgotten nearly all I once knew."

"My father was a squire of good family and fortune, and we lived in an old house called Mackery End, in one of the Midland counties. My mother died when I was fifteen, and the same year my father and I heard a sermon by Charles Wesley, and joined the Methodists. Fired with the zeal of the Lord, my father sold his house and lands, gave the money to the poor, and one morning led me by the hand into the lanes, that we might preach the Gospel to those who sat in darkness and had no light."

"We tramped through the whole of England with the good tidings of great joy. We slept in fields and sheds; we hungered and thirsted and fainted."

The years went by, and one day my father laid himself down on a truss of hay in a haggard, and died with the name of JESUS on his lips.

"This was a terrible blow to me, for I loved him dearly, but my heart did not break, because lately it had begun to throb with a new happiness. In the course of my wanderings my father and I had often visited our native village of Harpendeane, and had always found a welcome at the house of the Methodist minister, Charles Grimsdale. He had two daughters, Dorothy and Katharine—and I fell in love with Dolly."

He paused a moment and bowed his head. I waited silently till he continued.

"She was as beautiful as the flowers and the young grass. Her eyes had the glow of a forge in them—you know Scullsgate forge, when the glare streams over the fields of Great Nineveh on a summer night? She was a mischievous witch, and a dozen hearts lay at her feet. She laughed at them, played with them, and sometimes broke them. Half the county sighed after her. Her eyes were like the burning fiery furnace of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, slaying all who approached them.

"I had reason to think myself the most favoured of all her lovers, and though she often flouted me and drove me desperate, I had good hope of success.

"Kitty Grimsdale was not so beautiful as her sister, neither was she such a little minx and flirt. She was a sweet, rather quiet girl, engaged to a

good young clergyman of a neighbouring parish. I often went to visit the sisters at the cottage by the meeting-house, and as time went by I noticed that my wild, beautiful Dolly was growing tamer, and I often thought that her proud spirit was passing under the yoke of love.

"On one of my visits to Harpendeane I was surprised to meet my cousins Harold and Robert Macaulay. I had seen very little of them during my boyhood, and had heard no good. Still, I was glad to renew our acquaintance, for they declared that they had sown their wild oats, and had resolved to spend the rest of their lives in quiet and innocence. With this object in view, they bought a house in Harpendeane, a few doors below Grimsdale's Manse.

"They were fine-looking men, and the younger had the most pleasing manners. The elder I found a surly fellow, with little good-breeding, though he would occasionally put on a rough dashing air that captivated the hearts of silly women.

"I introduced my cousins to their neighbours, the Grimsdales, and the next day, when I met Doll in Harpendeane market-place, she scolded me so prettily that I could have kissed her then and there, for presenting her to such a bearish fellow as my cousin Harold; and a few minutes later I met Kitty, who reproached me for having brought under her notice an affected coxcomb like my cousin Robert.

"However, the sisters did not long remain so

dissatisfied with the Macaulays ; I often met my cousins at the Manse, and soon found out that they were welcome there. I fear that there was for me more wooing than prophesying in the summer months that followed. I shall never forget how Dolly and I used to sit in the Manse garden, where the rose-petals lay like blood-drops in the grass ; how we used to walk in the lanes and gather wild flowers, and speak in the language of smiles and glances ; how I used to say good-bye to her at her father's gate, and watch her go singing up the path under the rose arches, the colours of the roses painted on her white gown by the sunset. Well, it is all over now, as a dream when one awaketh.

"At the end of summer the Spirit drove me to carry the word into Kent, and when I returned the leaves were brown and dying and the swallows flown. But this death and decay could not cloud my happiness as I trudged through the lanes under the misty stars. I lay that night in a field near Harpendeane, and my joy kept me awake. Poor preacher as I was, I felt sure that Dorothy loved me, and next day I would come with the sun to her window, and offer her my heart in the dewy silent dawn. She would blush and hang her head, and stammer and falter—and plight her troth with kisses.

"I rose at cockcrow. The day was sweet, and the clouds flocked like doves into the east, where they blushed as red as Dolly's cheek. I had nearly reached the Manse, when I saw a man coming to

meet me, wild in look, disordered in dress. He was Charles Grimsdale.

" 'Minister !' I cried, my heart sickening with fear, ' what is wrong ?'

" His lips twitched, but he could not speak.

" 'Speak, for God's sake !' and I shook him by the arm.

" 'My girls are dead !'

" 'Dead ! What do you mean ? Both dead ?'

" 'Dead in trespasses and sins !'

" My jaw fell, and I groped for his meaning.

" 'They have run away with your cousins, the Macaulays !'

" 'Impossible ! You are raving.'

" 'Listen, before you decide that I am raving. My daughters' room was found empty this morning, and their bed had not been slept in. We searched for them and called them ; then I came across this letter on my writing-table. Read it.'

" He took a letter out of his pocket, and I read it, though a mist swam before my eyes.

" 'Forgive us, we beseech you. But we cannot help ourselves. We love Harold and Robert Macaulay with all our heart and soul and strength, and would go to hell for them.'

" I reeled, and clasped my hands to my head. I could scarcely believe my eyes and ears. But it was all true—my cousins' house was found shut up and empty, and I never saw them or my poor sweet Doll again."

John Palehouse was silent, and I gazed at him with all the love and pity of my soul in my eyes. For fully five minutes we remained thus ; then I broke the stillness with :

"Is that the end?"

"The end of my happiness, boy."

"Did you ever hear anything of Dorothy?"

"Yes; she died a year ago, after seven years of a life worse than death. My cousin deserted her at the end of a few months. She was afraid and ashamed to come home, and sank deeper and deeper into the slough. We lost all trace of her, and it was through a mere chance that I heard of her death last June. Katharine caught a fever, and died only three weeks after her elopement. Her lover, the young clergyman, is happier than I."

"And your cousins?"

"I know nothing of Harold. He may be alive or he may be dead. Robert died only six or seven months ago. He returned to Harpendeane with his brother for a few days' secret visit, and the vengeance of the Lord overtook him. He fell from the topmost window of his house, and perished even as Jezebel. I heard this from Mr. Grimsdale, for I was away at the time. I have never visited Harpendeane since my heart was broken."

"You tramped and preached?"

"Yes. I had neglected my prophesying for love-making, so the Lord thrust sore at me. I struggled to atone. For the last eight years I have tramped, starved, sweated, and prophesied. I have

cried the name of the Lord through the length and breadth of England. I have nursed the sick, rebuked the wicked, comforted the comfortless. In ministering to others I have done much to heal my own wound. My heart has often been vexed within me. But although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

We both sat motionless, gazing at the peaceful cloud-flecked sky. Some cattle were lowing on Forstal Farm, and children's voices rose and fell in a meadow near the church. I held out my hand to John Palehouse.

"Thank you for your confidence. I will try to be worthy of it."

"I felt sure that I could tell you, for—for——"

"For what?"

"I am not the only one of us to dream of a woman and cry her name."

I bit my lip.

"It was when we were lying in a field near the Brogues," he continued, "you moaned in your sleep, and cried——"

"Ruth?"

"Yes, lad—three or four times."

I bowed my head over my clenched hands.

"After that I felt sure that I could count on your

sympathy, and—and—Humphrey, if there is a load on your breast that might be eased by—by confidence——”

“Not yet !” I cried, starting up ; “not yet, John. My heart is still bleeding, and—and I’m trying to forget her. John, if you love me, do not mention her name.”

CHAPTER XI

OF THE METHODIST AT THE VILLAGE OF BIDDENDEN

THE friendship between John Palehouse and me, begun at Rolvenden, and confirmed at Tenterden, grew stronger and deeper as we tramped through Boar's Isle and High Halden to Biddenden. We were admirably suited to each other—by the law of contraries. Besides, there is nothing that draws men closer together than the sharing of afflictions.

John often spoke to me of his Dorothy—when we worked together on the Kentish farms, walked together in the Kentish lanes, or slept together in the Kentish fields. He seemed to find relief in talking of his sorrow. I steadfastly nursed mine. I was far more reserved by nature than he; my wound was fresher than his, and I felt a strange pleasure, often experienced by young men, in suffering alone. I did not realise that a wound untended by sympathy will often fester. I would tell my friend some day, I resolved, but not just yet, for every thought of Ruth was torture.

John sympathised with my silence, and did not

seek to break it. He tried to distract my thoughts, and it is wonderful how entrancing he made that ramble from Tenterden to Biddenden. I had long known his devotion to the green earth and her children, but it was during that week, when we tramped the convolvulus-netted lanes, or worked with rake and scythe in the scorched hayfields, that I gauged the full depth of this love. I was never tired of hearing him speak of Nature's beautiful things—of the wind among the larches, of stars, of the dawn, of the sweet rain he loved, of the rabbits that play in the beech-woods, of the squirrels that dart across the lane, and of the birds that praise God from daybreak to darkness.

Moreover, he knew all the wild legends of the country through which we roamed. He told me about Norah Powlard of Omenden, whose spook tempts women to starve their babes; about the Field of the Unbaptised near Hareplain Wood, where the souls of the unbaptised wander and wail; about Feverden House, where lived one who had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost; and about the woman-spirit that carries a light, and is always searching and never finds. The weirdness of these tales was increased as he told them by his implicit belief in them. He believed in ghosts and fetches, elves and evil spirits, and only smiled and sighed when I chid him for his superstition.

We did not travel fast—we took a week to cover the few miles between Tenterden and Biddenden. We worked on two farms—Pigeon Hoo and Duesden

—and preached at two villages—Boar's Isle and High Halden. It was John who first brought me into contact with organised Methodism. I had worshipped in the chapels when I had found them, but had never spoken to the ministers, or acquainted myself with their methods. Organised and settled Christianity is apt to look down on that which is unorganised and itinerant ; and this I found to be the case at High Halden, where John introduced me to the minister, and where we spent the night at the minister's little house, which he called Wesley Manse. He was very superior in his manner, criticised our sermons, and found fault with our methods, which he termed "too free and easy." He told us to our faces that John was a dreamer and fanatic, differing but little from the Puritan Nonconformists, and that I, in my love for the Sacrament, was very like a Papist. "I may also remark," he added, "that you will find the respect of the populace rather difficult to win in—er—your—er—ragged costume !"

It was at High Halden that I first noticed signs of decay and disunion in Methodism, and my glimpse of Minister Browne's parochial organisation opened my eyes to many defects in the Methodist system. I have never cared for chapel life, for the petty interests, ambitions, and quarrels of Salem and Little Bethel. I am a born wanderer—vagabond, if you like—and always preach badly within four walls. And though at the present time I am in charge of a chapel in the suburbs of London,

that is because my health will not suffer me to lead my old roaming, roofless life—and I long madly to have the market-cross for my pulpit, the tree-stump for my table, and the green earth for my bed.

On a grey day towards the end of June John Palehouse and I left Wesley Manse for Biddenden. We were prepared for some danger and difficulty at this village, for Mr. Browne had warned us that the curate of Biddenden was a vigorous opponent of the Word. Hitherto we had often found the clergy scornful and indifferent, but never hostile.

There was a rumble of distant thunder as we went up the village street on our way to the inn, for we were thirsty after our walk through the dust. John asked for a cup of cold water, and I a mug of beer, and we were seated drinking in the inn porch when a young clergyman came up and spoke to us.

He was fair, tall, and walked with a slight stoop. The epithet "vigorous opponent" seemed inappropriate to one who looked so indolent. He stared at us fixedly, and I saw that he had a cast in his eye.

"Are you the two preacher fellahs come up from Halden?" he drawled.

"Yes, friend; what would you have with us?" replied John Palehouse.

"I merely came to tell you to pack off. I won't have your demned ranting in my parish. Will you leave it?"

"No, friend."

The curate's fixed stare became a trifle more insolent.

"You won't? You may regret that decision, my good fellah."

"You can't interfere with us," I said, "if we don't make any disturbance in the village."

"Ain't preaching a disturbance? Demmit! I've heard of ranters being put in the stocks."

"I trust, friend," said John, "that you will not resist the Spirit. I—I mean to preach here."

The curate answered nothing, but, taking off his hat and bowing low in mock courtesy, turned on his heel and left us. The landlord was standing close by.

"Ye're in for an unaccountable vrother wud Curate Kitson," he remarked. "Mäay the Old Un fly awaay wud me if that feller sticks at anythink whatsumdever, fur all he looks so sheep-like. I advise you to mäake off, young men."

"We are not afraid of their terror," said John, rising; "we have regard unto the recompense of the reward. Come, Humphrey, fear not nor be dismayed, for behold He is with us alway, even to the end of the world."

His face shone with an intense exultation, such as a martyr's features might have worn. He took my arm, and we went down the street to an open space of common-land, orange with gorse. The clouds had parted above our heads, and the sun-shine struggled through the rift and kissed John's hair as he took off his hat and knelt down to pray among the thyme and the restharrow. I prayed too, chiefly for him. I felt sure that we were in

danger, and that we might count ourselves lucky if we escaped unharmed from the village of Biddenden.

A large crowd of people soon assembled. They looked far more brutal and depraved than any congregation we had hitherto addressed. In the villages where the parson was lazy and negligent we had found the people squalid, hopeless, and miserable, but here there was something more terrible than hopelessness stamped on the dark faces before us. John had hardly begun to speak when a chorus of hoots and hisses rose from the crowd. I could easily tell who prompted the disturbance, for Curate Kitson was lounging on the outskirts of the throng. He was speaking to some rough, ferocious-looking fellows, and my heart beat wildly and fast.

Suddenly my worst fears were realised. A stone was thrown at us. John, who had been appealing passionately to his surly hearers, and had forced attention from more than one of them, stopped speaking, and stared in amazement. The next moment another stone whirled at his head; he ducked, and avoided it. Another and another came hurtling at him; they struck him, and the blood poured down his face. I dashed to his side and tried to ward off the missiles, but they came thick and fast, and though some fell wide, the majority struck us. John seemed to be the chief butt, no doubt because he had been the chief withstander of Curate Kitson. He made me think of Stephen, as he knelt, bruised and blood-stained, the stones crashing round him. Only, unlike Stephen, he never spoke.

It could not last long. Already I saw the sun through a mist of blood, and a horrible feeling of nausea almost overpowered me. I still tried to shield John Palehouse, though he made feeble attempts to push me away. Then, suddenly, he stretched out his arms and fell forward without a complaint or a cry.

He lay with his face buried in the thyme, the blood trickling from his head, shoulders, arms, and sides. The crowd rushed on us, and I thought that the end had come.

Suddenly there was a loud shout, and the mob swayed and parted, as a gentleman and three stout grooms, all armed with hunting-whips, flogged their way through.

"What is this?" cried the gentleman, who looked like a country squire. "Kitson, do you know anything of this?"

"I'm sure I can't tell what made 'em so furious," drawled the curate. "I warned these two fellahs not to preach here, but they were too demned pig-headed to take my advice."

"Gad! this is a matter for a magistrate. I'll look to it later. Meantime, these poor wretches must be taken to Ithornden Hall. Can you walk as far as my coach?"—addressing me—"my grooms will carry your friend."

Two of the lads picked up the unconscious John Palehouse, and I followed, leaning heavily on the arm of the third. The squire strode on ahead, for he had ladies in his coach, he said, and must prepare

them for our arrival. He declared that they could easily walk home across the fields, and insisted that John and I should drive.

It was all swift and sudden as a dream. The crowd fell back sulkily, and we came to where a coach and four was standing. A stout, comely woman, whom I took to be the squire's wife, had already alighted, and a younger lady stood upon the carriage-steps. My heart gave a sudden, fierce bound, then every pulse in my body seemed to stand still. My eyes met the eyes of Ruth Shotover.

She stood in the carriage doorway, clad in a simple white gown, her curls straying from under a little black velvet hood. Her lips were parted in mingled wonder and pity, her eyes were full of tears. The sight of her sickened me more than the blows of a minute past—I fainted.

CHAPTER XII

OF THE METHODIST AND ONE WHO SUFFERED
MORE BRAVELY THAN HE

I OPENED my eyes in an old oak-panelled room, through the windows of which I saw trees and sky, pale and vague, like the landscape of a dream. I had no idea where I was or what had happened, but I was full of a nameless misery, the cause of which I could not determine—as when one wakes and is conscious of sorrow before remembering the exact source and nature of it.

At my side stood the squire. He was a short, red-faced gentleman, with kind blue eyes, and rather a loose mouth. His boots, hair, and finger-nails showed that he cared little for the niceties of the toilet. For a moment I lay staring at him in bewilderment; then suddenly remembrance came, and I started up with but one thought in my heart.

"Where is——" I was going to say "Ruth," but recollected myself, and bit my lip.

"Your friend? He's in the guest-room. The doctor is putting him to bed."

"Is he badly hurt?"

"He has been finely drubbed by those rascals, but there's little danger, I reckon, though a good deal of pain. Begad! You must be feeling pretty sick and sore yourself, Mr. Lyte. You see, I know your name. Miss Shotover told it me. She said that you were very friendly with her and her brother in Sussex."

I smiled grimly, and glanced at my tattered clothes and bloodstained hands.

"I do not look like a friend of Miss Shotover's."

"You've been tramping the roads, and can't be expected to look as if you'd just taken leave of your valet. Gad! I wish we had more of your kind in Merry England. The parsons are a sorry herd, and we need an honest man or two to show 'em their duty. I must apologise for the way those knaves treated you at the village. They shall suffer for it, you may be sure. But, come, you ought to be in bed like your friend."

"Indeed, I would rather not——" I thought with horror of the wakeful hours I should be sure to spend, and of the thoughts that would torture me as I tumbled and tossed.

"Take my advice, and go to bed at once. You've been infernally knocked about."

"Pray do not press me. Let me wait till my friend is able to see me, then allow me to watch the night by him."

The squire shook his head, but seeing that I was obdurate, at last gave in.

"You can sit quiet here till the doctor is ready to

overhaul you. Then, if he allows it, you can go to your friend's room."

"May I ask," I said, as he was leaving me, "to whom I am indebted for all this kindness?"

"My name's Wychellow, and this house is Ithornden Hall. Begad, sir! don't speak to me of kindness; my wife and I are only too pleased to do all we can for you."

He left the room, and I drew my chair up to the fire, for though the month was June, old Ithornden was damp and cold enough; besides, I was shivering with fever. I was miserable and spiritless, my limbs ached wearily, and I felt horribly sick. It seemed as if fate had pursued me, and overtaken me at Ithornden Hall. To escape Ruth Shotover I had torn myself from my friends and the county of my birth—and here she was under the same roof as I. How had she come to Ithornden, and why? Surely heaven was unmerciful to cast such a snare on my path. Oh, but I would flee from it! I would insist on removing John to some farmhouse in the neighbourhood; I would not stay another hour in this house of temptation. But who would nurse John at a farm? He would have to lie hard and be roughly tended. I had no right to sacrifice him in such a way. After all, my strained relations with both Ruth Shotover and her brother would induce her to avoid me as much as lay in her power. I could have my meals with John Palehouse, and so escape even a glimpse of that torturing sweet face.

I sat miserably while the glow of the afternoon

paled, and evening came with pink and golden lights on the oak floor. The fire was an inert crimson mass, except where in one corner a solitary flame writhed its singing horn. Sometimes I dozed, and dreamed again of the forsaken roads along which I was bound to tramp, in spite of dizzy weariness. I never slept for more than five minutes at a time, and would wake with a groan. The birds were chirping and gurgling in the trees outside, and every now and then a swift flew screaming through the air, and—such were my depression and weakness—made me start.

At last the doctor came. His examination was short, and, though he advised me to go to bed, he finally gave in to my entreaties, and, after an application of ointment and bandages, allowed me to go to my friend's room.

I went down a long dark passage, smelling of old wood, and was just about to lift the latch of the door pointed out to me, when it opened from the inside, and I stood face to face with Ruth Shotover.

The blood dyed her neck and cheeks, and my own tingled and throbbed in every vein.

"You've come to see Mr. Palehouse?"

The words roused me out of the trance into which I had fallen.

"How do you know my friend's name?" I asked, rather abruptly, and the colour left her face at once.

"We met in Hertfordshire," she answered shortly, and I saw that my question and the manner of it had been rude.

"You must forgive me my rough speaking. It is evident that my manners as well as my senses were knocked out of me this morning."

She smiled in her old sweet way.

"Lud! how terribly you must have suffered under that cruel stoning!"

"Not half as terribly as my friend. Tell me, is he better?"

"Faith, I can't say. He's conscious, but in great pain. You're in a fearful plight yourself."

"It is nothing. Is your brother at Ihornden?"

"Yes. He was in Mr. Palehouse's room a minute ago. Sir Miles Wychellow was a friend of our father's; and when he heard that poor Guy was sick, he asked him to Ihornden Hall."

"Then has your brother been ill?"

"He's ill now, and it's vastly necessary that he should have rest and change. We've been here nearly a week, and I've no idea when we shall be able to go back to Ewehurst."

Her voice trembled with tears. She curtseyed hurriedly, and left me gazing after her as she sped down the corridor. For an instant I stood motionless, while the bitterness of death nestled in my heart, and made it almost stop its beating. I recovered myself with difficulty, and went into John Palehouse's room.

Lady Wychellow was at the bedside, but she slipped out when I came in, and left me alone with my friend. The room was dim, for the curtains were drawn, though a red shaft of sunset streamed

through the narrow slit between them. The walls were ribbed with oak, and two handsome, gilt-edged mirrors reflected the furniture, which was heavy and luxurious. It was then I realised that, had it not been for Ruth's recognition, John would doubtless be lying in the servants' quarters instead of in the chief guest-room of Ithornden Hall.

I went softly over to the bed—a huge four-poster, with green hangings. John's eyes were shut, but he opened them at my approach, and said feebly :

"Well, my lad, you see me in a pretty plight. I hope you escaped with less bruises than I."

"Indeed, I have only some trifling hurts. It makes me wretched to see you thus, John."

"They did it in ignorance," he said earnestly; "they are sorry enough for it now, I'll be bound. Oh, poor shepherdless sheep!"

"You think more of them than of yourself."

"They are in a worse plight than I. Oh, lad, my heart aches for the poor things."

He spoke with difficulty, and as I knew that every word must mean torture, I implored him to be silent, and for some time he lay with no other sign of life than the wandering of his large, restless eyes. I watched beside him till the patch of ruby light on the floor had faded to yellow and to pearl. Then I was called away to a futile attempt to eat, while Lady Wychellow and Ruth Shotover watched by the bed.

I resumed my post at about nine, and though Sir Miles Wychellow came several times and begged me to take some rest, I remained till morning in an arm-

chair by my friend's bedside. I longed to ask John about his acquaintanceship with Ruth, but shrank from disturbing him ; besides, he was delirious, and raved for the greater part of the night.

I did not sleep, and was sure that, even if I had been in bed, I could not have slept. I felt glad that, instead of tossing alone, I was sitting by my friend ; for, though unconscious, he was, nevertheless, a companion, and his ravings were not wild and horrible, but gentle as the voice of a little child who talks in his sleep.

He spoke of the old days at Harpendeane, and of his evenings with Dorothy Grimsdale in the Manse garden. That name was on his lips the livelong night—"Dorothy ! Dorothy !"—and I wondered if it would be the same with me if I fell ill, and whether I should lie from roosting-time to cock-crow crying, "Ruth ! Ruth !" The thought horrified me, and I resolved to fight desperately against the sickness I believed was at hand.

My poor friend's sufferings were awful, and between his cries of "Dorothy !" and gentle wanderings in a happy time long past, he comforted himself from the Book of Job and from the Psalms : " ' Why dost thou strive against Him ? For He giveth not account to any of His matters.' 'He will deliver my soul from going into the pit, and my life shall see the light.' 'Why art thou so cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me ? Hope in God : for I shall yet praise Him, Who is the health of my countenance and my God.' "

These words, uttered in a semi-unconscious state, stole like drops of healing oil into my heart. A sudden realisation of my ingratitude and rebellion came to me. I had railed against Fate for bringing Ruth Shotover and me together at Ithornden Hall, forgetting that Fate is only another name for Providence. "How should a man be just with God? If he contend with Him, he cannot answer; he cannot answer Him one of a thousand. He is wise in heart and mighty in strength. Who hath hardened himself against Him and hath prospered?" said John Palehouse from the bed. I had been murmuring against God, questioning His will, kicking against His commandments. "Be ye not like to horse and mule," said John Palehouse, "which have no understanding, whose mouths must be held with bit and bridle lest they fall upon thee." If God's will was being fulfilled in my greatest misfortune, I had no right to do otherwise than rejoice. "God is faithful," said John Palehouse, "Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." I knew that He would help me to bear the tormenting presence of Ruth Shotover day after day, even week after week. I went over to the window and fell on my knees, and the tears in my eyes were not of misery, but of contrition.

The dawn was in the room, and I drew aside the curtain and looked out. A beautiful park sloped from the house, and beyond it lay twilight fields;

and a range of blue barrows on the horizon. The sky was pale, and the morning star was wan. A sudden flush of light throbbed in the east, the wind swept up and shook the trees, and the birds began a drowsy whimper. I heard myself called from the bed.

"Is it morning?"

"Yes. The sun is just going to rise."

"Is the dawn grey?"

"No, red as blood."

"Then we shall have mist and rain. How sweetly the birds are singing! I love their voices; they teach me, 'Fear not; ye are of more value than many sparrows.'"

I crossed over to the bed.

"Are you better, dear John?"

"Better in mind, if not in body. I feel sure that God has heard my prayers, and has forgiven those poor misguided souls."

"Can I do anything for you?"

"No, thank you, boy. Humphrey, I have seen a ghost."

I knit my brows.

"I meant to have told you before this, but the Lord thrust sore at me, and I could not speak. You remember the young clergyman I told you of, who was engaged to Katharine Grimsdale?"

"Well?"

"He is in this house."

"You don't mean Guy Shotover?"

"Yes. Do you know him?"

"We—we—knew each other in Sussex. But I

had no idea that he and the unfortunate young man of your story were the same."

"I didn't know that he was in these parts, and was surprised to see him yesterday. I called him a ghost because he is the shadow of his former self. In the old days he was a stalwart, healthy young man, full of life and gaiety. Now he is a wreck in body and mind."

"No wonder, poor fellow! after all he has suffered."

I lapsed into silence. For an instant I thought that I had grasped the secret that cankered the lives of Ruth and Guy Shotover, but the next moment I saw that such a cause could not have produced the effect I had witnessed. The curate's love-affair could be only a matter of sorrow and regret, not a present and pregnant anxiety, mysteriously bound up with Enchmarsh of Kitchenhour.

"Did you know Shotover's sister at Harpendeane?" I asked Palehouse.

"Very well. I dined more than once at Golden Parsonage. Her name is Ruth."

His eyes met mine suddenly, and I quailed. For a moment I thought of telling him everything, but my reserve and sentiment were too strong for me.

"It is a common name," I said abruptly; and with his accustomed tact he never again alluded to the subject.

I sat by my friend's side while the daylight grew, and when the sun rose I sang to him Bishop Ken's Morning Hymn.

CHAPTER XIII

OF THE METHODIST AND THE MAN HE HATED

As soon as breakfast was over, I went to bed, and rose much refreshed after a few hours' sleep. I spent the rest of the day in my friend's room—I dared not mix with the household and meet Ruth.

Time wore on uneventfully. I quickly recovered from my bruises, and John Palehouse began slowly to mend. It was a beautiful summer; the days were long and golden, the sun rose early and dawdled over his setting. I seldom went out of doors, though the sunshine and the scent of the flowers invited me, for from my window I often saw a white-gowned figure moving in the garden, or standing like a solitary patch of snow in one of the great fields near Ithornden. We rarely met, and then it was only a bow and a curtsy, a "good day, madam," and a "good day, sir." Guy Shotover I saw oftener. He seemed disposed to forget what had passed between us at Ewehurst Parsonage, and now that Enchmarsh was no longer present to rule him, was friendly enough with the man he had but a short time ago ordered from his house. I fear that I met his

advances surlily at first. I could not help thinking that he had a great deal to do with Ruth's unhappiness. But, after all, he had once been kind to me, and had befriended me when I stood in sore need of a friend. Besides, the poor fellow looked so ill that it was impossible to nurse enmity. I felt sure that he must be in a decline, and his scarlet cheeks, shaking hands, harsh cough and hysterical laughter confirmed my opinion. He occasionally came to see John, and would sit by the bedside, jerking his head as if he had St. Vitus' dance, twisting his pocket handkerchief round his fingers, and starting if anyone spoke loud, if a chair creaked, or if a bird flew crying past the window.

Towards the middle of July, John was well enough to leave his room, and often walked in the garden, leaning on my arm. Sometimes we roamed along the twisting lanes to Kalsham or Stede Quarter, or sat together in the fields of Plurenden, or lay together in the scent and shade of Dashnanden Wood. We each bought a new coat in the village, for those in which we had arrived at Ithornden were rags, unfit for a gentleman's house. I do not know whether it was the new coat or the sickness from which he was recovering, but I began to notice a change in John Palehouse. He lost his look of tramp and vagrant, and I saw in him the high-born squire of Mackery End. His hands were no longer brown and coarse, but white and transparent, so that one saw the blue veins through the skin; the sunburn had faded from his cheek, and left it as softly tinted

as when his mother used to kiss it. Sir Miles Wychelow took a great fancy to him, often sat in his room, and surrendered to his entreaties that no notice should be taken of the rough usage he had received at Biddenden. However, in spite of the kindness and consideration with which he was treated, I noticed in him an ever-increasing desire to resume his wanderings.

"While I am idling here," he said, "hundreds may be dying without the Lord. Oh, pray, my lad, that you and I may soon be preaching on Frittenden Green."

One afternoon, after a shower of rain, I went out into the garden. The flowers smelled so sweet, and the wet grass and trees were so beautiful, that my heart bounded with joy in spite of its load of sorrow, and I realised that God would still leave some happiness in my life if He left me the earth and sky. From my childhood I had found comfort in Nature. The trill of a nightingale would soothe the misery of the little beaten child who lay and sobbed in the long grass of Spell Land. The overworked boy, full of disappointment and vain longing, would look up with a smile when he saw the sun burst from behind the meadows of Ellenwhorne and turn the Brede River to blood. And this day the sorrow of the despairing man was blown to heaven with the incense of the flowers.

The lane looked even more inviting than the garden, and I strolled down the avenue towards the channel of moving shadows. At the gate I heard

a horse's hoofs beating a gay presto on the road, and the next moment a horseman trotted up and entered the grounds. My cheeks flushed and my blood warmed angrily at the sight of him. He was Enchmarsh of Kitchenhour.

He looked wonderfully handsome. His eyes were bright, his cheeks ruddy with exercise, and his parted lips showed his fine, white teeth. He recognised me at once, and his brow darkened.

"Hello! Where the devil do you come from?"

"From Ihornden Hall."

"What are you doing there?"

"That's no concern of yours."

"Isn't it, though? What about a certain lady I have forbidden you to have anything more to do with?"

"I don't care a jot for your commands."

"You don't! I'll make you."

He raised his crop, but I sprang forward, twisted it out of his hand, and hurled it far away among the bushes. For a moment we faced each other, our eyes blazing, our bosoms swelled with fury. At last Enchmarsh broke the silence.

"What hell's reason brings you here?"

"That's my business." My voice shook with rage, but suddenly my heart smote me for such an unchristian spirit, and I added:

"I am with a fellow-preacher who had some rough usage in these parts, and is staying at Ihornden till he recovers."

"Confound you! And look here, you Lyte, keep

clear of Miss Shotover, and keep clear of me. The sight of you makes me want to eat grass like a sick cat."

He cantered past me, then turned in his saddle and cried :

"By the by, my engagement to Miss Shotover is no longer a secret. We are to be married next month." He burst into a fit of triumphant laughter, and left me confounded.

I stood gazing after him, gnawing my lips with anger. Surely God did not expect me to bear this fellow's insults. In that moment of fury I half thought of challenging him. At last, however, I grew ashamed of myself, and as the afternoon was so soft and sweet, decided to ask John Palehouse to come out and share it with me.

I reached John's room without encountering Enchmarsh. He had evidently not heard of the visitor's arrival, and as I still felt angry and sore I did not mention it. He took my arm, and we went out into the lanes together, and strolled as far as Brakefields Farm. The summer swale was dusking into night; the sun had set, and violet clouds were veiling the red scar he had left behind him. A little cold breeze blew up from Bettenham, and I advised John to go home.

We took a path through the fields, for it was the shortest way, and John loved the fields. We paused at a hedge, and watched the moon rise out of the purple mist, while the fold-star shone timidly over haunted Omenden. Suddenly I heard voices on

the other side of the hedge, and my heart thrilled while Ruth Shotover spoke.

"Miss Shotover has also come out to admire the evening," said Palehouse. Then his voice trailed off, and his face whitened, as Enchmarsh answered Ruth.

"Who is that?" he asked sharply. "I know the voice."

"That is her betrothed, Squire Enchmarsh of Kitchenhour in Sussex."

"Enchmarsh!"

"Yes. Do you know the name?"

"No, but I know the voice. Let me look."

He pulled aside a rope of bryony, and peered through the hedge, then drew back with white lips.

"You may know that man as Enchmarsh of Kitchenhour, but I know him as my cousin, Harold Macaulay!"

I stared at him stupefied, and the blood was like ice in my veins with horror.

"The scoundrel who ruined Dorothy Grimsdale?"

He nodded.

"Are you sure that the fellow is your cousin? As far as I know he has never borne any name but Enchmarsh."

"As far as you know. But I am certain he is Macaulay"—he looked again. "Yes, I am too familiar with that dark face to mistake it. For some reason or other he has changed his name. Woe betide him! What has brought him here?"

His cheeks were hectic with excitement. He bit

his lip, and one thin hand wrung the other till the joints cracked.

"He arrived here an hour or two ago," I said, forcing myself to speak calmly. "He has evidently come to visit Miss Shotover"—and I writhed.

"How long will he stay? If he stays I must go. I hate him! I hate him! No, no, no! I must not hate him. The dear Lord prayed for His enemies. But I can't pray. My tongue is dried up like potsherd."

His teeth gritted together, and his limbs trembled. I had never seen him so passionate.

"Come, dear John, do not fret yourself. You are far too weak and ill to leave Ithornden—and why should you go away? You need never meet him, and he probably will not stay long. Take my arm, and let me help you back to the house."

He grew suddenly calmer.

"I am forgetful of my calling. The Lord's preacher should not hate or rail. God must forgive me. I am very weak and unprofitable, though there are many years since my conversion."

He took my arm, and I led him back by the way we had come. He was silent for a long time, then he said suddenly: "But how is it that he is betrothed to Miss Shotover? I can't understand such a state of affairs."

I struggled with a tempest of bitter thoughts.

"Perhaps she does not know," I said faintly.

"That is impossible. Her brother was engaged to Kitty Grimsdale."

"What can we do to save her," I cried hopelessly.

"Perhaps my cousin has repented and been turned to the Lord. Surely she could not have accepted him as he was."

"He's no more converted than the devil!"

"Then what can have induced her to accept him?"

"I can't say. Sometimes I think that she has sold herself to pay her brother's debts."

"That is possible, but hardly probable. What is her attitude towards Macaulay—Enchmarsh, I mean?"

"As far as I can see she hates him."

Palehouse shuddered.

"Poor girl, we must pray for her."

"We must do more than pray."

"What more can we do?"

"Speak, entreat, conjure——"

I stopped suddenly in my wild talk. Our eyes met, and there was in his a strange look of interest and of pity.

I lay awake all that night in misery. My bed was soon hot and tumbled with my tossing, and once or twice I rose and went to cool my forehead at the window. The night was very black. I could feel no wind on my face, but I heard it moaning and roaring in the trees. One word was borne me on the wind's wild cry—one word formed the burden of the owls' wail in Ithornden Park—"Ruth!"

How could I save her? She seemed beyond my reach—beyond the reach of all save God. She had

made her choice in the light of knowledge ; she was under no delusion, and believed no lie.

Towards morning I ceased to writhe and groan, but began to consider. I lay still and pondered while the sky reddened and the birds woke, and suddenly, as the first sun-ray kissed me healingly, came to a decision.

It was a bold resolve, but I was desperate for Ruth, and courage is strong when born of desperation. I decided to go to her, tell her all I knew, and entreat her to give up Enchmarsh.

She might rebuke me—and a rebuke from her would be terrible ; nevertheless, I would face it. I commended my resolution to God, rose, and went to John Palehouse, that I might fortify myself by conversation with him ; for he was one of those whose mere presence consoles the afflicted and strengthens the weak.

CHAPTER XIV

OF THE METHODIST AND THE WOMAN HE LOVED

I DID not have an opportunity for speaking to Ruth till evening. Then I found her alone in one of the quaint old sitting-rooms in the west wing of Ithornden Hall. The oaken walls were hung with prints and strips of tapestry; the ceiling was ribbed with heavy beams, on which the firelight danced ruddily; the polished floor reflected the legs of the tables and chairs—old-fashioned, twisted, and carved. There were a couple of candlesticks on the table, and a hundred candle-flames flickered and throbbed in the mirror-like panels of the wall. The window was only half curtained, and through the open space could be seen the branches of the trees, wildly tossing against the moon, the stars scudding in and out of the storm-clouds, and a silver shower of rain.

Ruth sat before the fire, some needlework on her lap, her hands folded idly over it, while her eyes gazed into the embers. She started at my footfall, and rose. She was all in white, but the firelight made ruddy smears on her dress, and a red carnation was fastened in her bosom. She curtseyed stiffly;

while her eyes questioned me. My tongue stuck, and I moistened my lips again and again before I could speak. I dare say that I ought to have approached my subject circumspectly, but I am a fool at the little artifices of speech, and blundered out :

"Miss Shotover, forgive me if I seem rude, for I must speak, even if I offend you."

"Lud ! I shall never think you rude, Mr. Lyte. I know you too well for that."

"Thank you. You give me courage."

I sat down opposite to her.

"You knew John Palehouse in Hertfordshire, I believe. He has just told me the truth about Enchmarsh——"

"And Dorothy Grimsdale ?"

"Yes. I felt sure that you knew it too."

"My brother was engaged to Katharine Grimsdale."

I leaned forward in my seat, and our eyes met. Mine were burning, hers were full of tears.

"Miss Shotover, you will think me the most insolent dog on earth, but I have come to you this evening to implore you to break off your engagement——"

"Mr. Lyte ! I——"

"I speak abruptly—it's my failing. I have no aptitude for mincing and biting my words when my heart is full. Miss Shotover, Enchmarsh is a villain—you know it—and you do not love him. No doubt you have a reason for accepting him, but,

believe me, nothing can justify your marriage with that beast. I—I have a sincere regard for you, and it would break my heart to see you united to a man who would make your life hell with his brutalities and intrigues. I speak to you as I would speak to a sister I saw in danger and wished to save, so forgive me as you would forgive a brother."

She sat absolutely rigid, her hands locked together, her cheeks and eyes glowing as if a fever had stricken her.

"I had to speak," I cried desperately.

"I know—I know ; but it's all useless."

"Useless, madam !"

"Useless. I—I can't unwrite the past."

"You can blot it out, and, oh, I entreat you, blot out that man's name from your life."

"You don't know what you ask," she cried, covering her face.

I groaned.

"You've done your best," she continued more calmly ; "but your best is useless. I must marry Enchmarsh. I can't tell you why—but I must."

"Oh, don't drive me desperate. My life will be all hell if you commit this act of madness. It's indeed madness, I assure you, to cast away in your youth all hope and happiness, to break your own heart, to—to—— O God of Mercy ! Who knows ? It may drive you to self-murder!—damn your own soul."

She did not speak, but two tears glittered on her face. I lost all self-control, and, sinking on my knees before her, cried :

"Ruth! Ruth! For the sake of the God Who made us——"

She sprang up, but I caught her dress—it was hot and scorched by the fire.

"I shall not let you go till you have promised to give up that brute——"

"Humphrey—for God's sake——"

"Hush, sweetheart, hush—don't cry. You are mine, Ruth. I love you! I love you! Neither God nor Satan shall part us. Do not cry. The world has treated us infernally, but we'll defy it together. We'll laugh at it, Ruth—we'll laugh at the whole miserable farce that tried to keep us apart, but failed, darling—failed! For I love you, Ruthie. You are all mine, and I shall never let you go."

Then I started to my feet, caught her to my breast, and devoured her thin face with kisses—the mad, hungry kisses I had so often given her in dreams.

That embrace lasted for an instant, which seemed eternity. She did not struggle or scream, but lay against me as if lifeless, while the tears poured down her face. All the love with which my heart was throbbing was on my lips as I pressed them to hers, and in my eyes as my tears mingled with hers. We forgot the past; we ceased to dread the future. Love veiled all except the present—which was Paradise. We threw back our heads and laughed aloud; then our lips pressed again and more rapturously.

The spell broke. She sprang from me with a scream, and I threw myself on the floor. The past flashed back to us with its misery; the future loomed before us with its dread. The present was once more anguish.

We crouched opposite each other for several silent minutes. The clock ticked on, the fire crackled and spluttered, and an owl was crying far away in Thornden Park. A dog howled, and I started, and, raising myself on my elbow, gazed across at Ruth. She half sat, half huddled, on the settle, her hands over her face, her hair, dishevelled with our embrace, pouring over her shoulders. Now and then a great sob convulsed her.

"After all," I said at last, misery making me cruel, "I suppose you have an excellent reason for all this." She started, looked at me, and shuddered.

"I say you doubtless have a good reason for the blasting of two lives."

"Don't, Humphrey, don't!"

"Why shouldn't I speak? This is so—so extremely unpleasant that I should hope there was some reason for it all."

"Humphrey, don't look at me in that way."

"But I—oh, sweetheart, tell me why we should suffer so."

I had risen and taken her cold hand.

"You're so vastly cruel. I can't tell you."

"You must tell me. I have a right to know. A poor fellow going to hell has a right to know why he's sent there."

"I—I can't tell you. We shall be undone."

"Why should you be undone?"

"Because—because—— Oh, Humphrey, have pity——"

Her eyes were so beseeching that I cursed my selfishness.

"Don't tell me, then, Ruthie."

"That's kind of you."

She sat silently for a time, her eyes big with thought. Then she said suddenly :

"But I don't see, after all, why I shouldn't tell you. You won't betray me."

"My darling, I'd rather die in torture."

"Don't call me 'darling.' It's cruel—and it's wicked, too, Humphrey."

"I know it is, but, before God——"

"Hush, hush! I'm going to tell you a story—my story. I can't bear to have you misunderstand me, and when you've heard, you will see how it is that I can't give up Enchmarsh, though it is true, as you have guessed, that I—I don't love him."

"Oh, if you would only tell me, Ruth!"

"But you must promise—no, you must swear—not to breathe a word of what I am going to say. Oh, pray don't think me distrustful, but this is a matter of life and death. A day or two ago torture wouldn't have dragged this confession from me, but to-night your soul and mine have met, and I know that you would rather die than injure me. So I shall tell you my life's secret ; you will understand—and you will go."

"Go, Ruth?"

"Yes—go for ever."

"Oh, my God!"

"You must go—ah! but I forgot your poor sick friend; it might rouse suspicion if you left Ithornden without him—but you must go, Humphrey, or I must."

"You can't leave, and it is I who have brought this misery on our heads by my uncontrolled passions. I can tell part of the truth to John Palehouse—that I am in hopeless love—and easily find some excuse to offer Sir Miles."

"It will be kind and generous of you to do so. You and I are best apart after this."

"I shall go to-morrow."

"Thank you. And now for my story—and your oath."

She took a small Bible from her pocket and held it out to me.

"Swear on this."

She looked like a child in her simple white frock, with her soft, sweet face and loose hair. The gravity of her eyes only enhanced the babyishness of her dimples and the full curves of her lips. I felt for her the devotion, touched with awe, which one so often feels for a child.

I took the Bible in my hand, and said over the sacred words, "So help me, God!" and she bowed her head with the simple reverence of a babe.

We drew our seats close together, so that she could put her lips to my ear. Then came that

conversation in whispers, which still haunts my dreams.

"John Palehouse told you the story of Kitty Grimsdale and Robert Macaulay?"

"Yes."

"He—he told you how Macaulay met his death?"

"Yes."

"How did he say it was?"

"He fell out of an upper window and was killed."

"That is all John Palehouse knows. I know that Macaulay did not fall out of the window—he was pushed out."

"You mean that he was murdered?"

"Yes—by my brother."

It was as if my heart had stopped beating, and a dimness clouded my eyes. I saw Ruth's face through a mist, and her voice seemed to come from far off.

"My brother," she repeated, her eyes wide with dread.

"Poor, poor sweet Ruthie! Is this the secret you have been nursing all this while?"

She began to cry hysterically.

"Yes—my secret, my awful companion and bed-fellow. Humphrey, I've told no one but you. You—you won't betray me?"

"Ruth!" and I pointed to the Bible on her lap.

"Forgive me. I'm crazy with grief. I know that you will keep your oath. You're honourable, and you love me. But I haven't yet told you how Robert Macaulay's—m-murder led to my betrothal."

"Tell me, dear."

"It was like this. I was only a little boarding-school girl when my brother lost Kitty Grimsdale. I had a vague idea of what had befallen him, but, of course, he wouldn't allow a child to know much about his misfortune. It was not till many years later that I heard the story—and I may here tell you that I had never met either of the Macaulays.

"When I was sixteen I went to stay with a school friend, Milly Rogers, in London. Two young men were constant visitors at the house. Their name was Enchmarsh, and they had some fine property in Sussex. It was not long before the elder began to pay me attentions, and one night, when we were brushing our hair, Milly made me flush scarlet by whispering, 'I vow Mr. Harold Enchmarsh will ask you to marry him, Ruthie.'

"A week or two after our first meeting he did just as Milly said, and told me that he loved me madly. I know you'll think me vastly wicked and foolish, but the idea of being engaged at sixteen—of showing my ring to the young ladies at my school—together with his handsome face and dashing manner, turned my head. I promised to be his wife. He begged me to keep our affair secret for a few days. I loved secrets, and consented. About a week later he came to me and suggested a runaway match. This made me suspicious, and I asked him why he wanted an elopement, considering that my brother would doubtless be only too pleased at our marriage. He gave me an evasive answer, but my fears were not to be so easily soothed, and

at last he told me that his name wasn't Enchmarsh. He and his brother had inherited some property from a relation, and had been forced by the requirements of the will to adopt his name. Their real name was Macaulay, and his brother was the wrecker of Guy's happiness.

"I tell you that I'd never really loved him, and can you wonder that at this revelation I came to my senses, and ordered him away? 'Do not let me see your face again,' I cried; 'your brother ruined my brother's life, and you sinned with him. You're a scoundrel and a deceiver. Do not let me see your face again!'

"The next day I went back to Guy at Golden Parsonage, and told him all that had happened. He said that I'd done right, and that his heart would have broken if I'd married Enchmarsh. So I took comfort, and soon afterwards I left school and came home to live with my dear Guy.

"We heard nothing of the Enchmarshes for about three months. Then a sudden rumour flew through Harpendeane that they were in the village. They were in their old house, which they hadn't yet managed to sell, and when Guy heard how near his enemy was to him I saw a terrible look creep into his eyes, and though I kissed him, and sat on his knee all the evening, I couldn't drive it away. His manner became vastly strange; he spoke wildly of the past and of all he had suffered, and he used some dreadful words with regard to Robert Macaulay. I'm sure that he was half mad with

grief, and that he wasn't really responsible for what followed.

"I cried myself to sleep that night, and the next morning I rose early and plucked him a salad for his breakfast. I wanted to show him, just by a little thing like that, how much I loved him and wanted to make him happy. Breakfast-time came, but he never appeared. I went up to his room, but couldn't find him. I looked for him in the church—he's such a devout man, and I thought he might have gone to ask God's pardon for his anger of yesterday—but he was nowhere to be seen. I began to feel vastly anxious, and questioned the villagers, and at last heard that a little boy had noticed him leave Golden Parsonage early in the morning, and take the road for Harpendeane.

"A terrible foreboding seized me. I ordered my horse, and rode after him. I made inquiries from time to time on my way, and traced him to the Macaulays' house. Then I felt sick with fear, and my legs shook under me as I dismounted. There was an atmosphere of dread all round that house. I trembled in every limb, and—I shall always swear it—so did my horse.

"I didn't knock, but went straight upstairs to a room which I knew the brothers used as a study. For a moment I thought that there was blood on the door-handle, but it was only the sun streaming through a pane of red glass in the staircase window. I opened the door, then fell on my knees—because of what I saw between me and the light.

"Two men were standing, and one lay on the floor, with a dark stream oozing from his hair. The men who stood were Harold Enchmarsh and my brother, while it was Robert Enchmarsh who lay bleeding between them.

"The thud of my fall made them start and turn round, and my brother threw his arms above his head, and staggered against the wall. Enchmarsh came to me and lifted me to my feet. But I could neither speak nor walk ; I could only stand staring at that dreadful Thing on the floor.

"Then Guy spoke, but I couldn't answer, so he ran up to me, and fell at my feet, and, clinging to my gown, cried : ' Little sister ! little sister ! ' and sobbed with his face against my knee. He told me how he had gone hotfoot to the village with murder in his heart, how he had gone into that awful house, into that very room ; how he had found Robert Enchmarsh leaning out of the window, and how Satan had entered into him. He had stolen across the floor like a panther ; he had seized his enemy, they had struggled together ; Enchmarsh had bitten him—he showed me the bleeding place on his hand—he had thrown Enchmarsh out of the window.

" ' Then as I turned round, ' said my poor Guy, ' expecting to find the devil standing behind me, I saw this man, Harold Enchmarsh, in the doorway. I shall not tell you what passed between us. It's enough to say that his servant is at this very moment saddling a horse to ride off to S. Albans and fetch

the constable. Ruthie, Ruthie, your brother will be hanged !'

"Oh, Humphrey, I can't help crying when I think of the awful minutes that followed—how I shuddered and cried and clung to Guy, praying God to have mercy on us and strike us both dead. Enchmarsh stood by in silence, and suddenly I threw myself on my knees before him and caught his arm.

" 'Pity me, pity me, and spare my brother ! Oh, be merciful and spare us both !'

"He didn't speak, but gazed down on me, then tried to move away, but I clung to him, praying him to pity me for Christ's sake. He swore, and struggled to shake me off, but I only gripped more fiercely, and he dragged me half across the room before I fell at his feet.

"Then he spoke—for as I lay before him, I begged him to pity me for his love's sake.

" 'It's true that I love you.'

" 'Then spare my brother for your love's sake !'

"He caught me up from the floor, and I could see the pulses beating in his throat, so close was his face to mine, as he whispered :

" 'Ruth, if you marry me, I'll spare your brother !'

" 'No, no, no !' and I sprang from him, sick with horror.

" 'I would rather die !' cried my brother, who had overheard the whisper.

" 'As you please,' said Enchmarsh, biting his lips with vexation, for he wanted me more than he wanted his revenge.

"At that moment there was a trample of hoofs in the yard. The servant was starting for S. Albans. I saw Guy turn pale, and shiver from head to foot, and my love for him overcame my hatred of Enchmarsh.

"*'Stop him! stop him!'* I shrieked. *'I will marry you!'*

"*'You shall not,'* cried my brother. *'I'd rather die at the torture stake!'*

"*'Stop him! stop him!'* I could cry nothing else till Enchmarsh had called to the servant to wait a few minutes. Then he turned to me.

"*'Listen, both of you. Though this is the corpse of my only brother, I'm willing to forgive his murderer if the murderer's sister will become my wife. Ruth, during these past months I have loved you, and you only——'*

"*'He's a lying scoundrel!'* interrupted Guy. *'Don't listen to him, Ruth.'*

"*'Hold your tongue, and let me settle this matter with your sister.'*

"He took me by the hand, and led me aside.

"*'I love you,'* he said, *'and if you will marry me, your brother shall be safe. I give you my solemn oath.'*

"I gazed from one man to the other in hopeless misery. In spite of all he said, I knew that Guy was really in mortal fear. He'd always been afraid of death, and his lips were white and his limbs were shaking. I loved him more than my happiness—more than I hated Enchmarsh. You may call me

weak and wicked, but I couldn't help myself. I promised to marry Enchmarsh if he would spare my brother. If at any time I went back from my word he might go back from his. Guy protested vehemently at first, and vowed that life would be hell if bought at such a price. But my arguments overcame him.

"The servant waiting in the yard was told to unsaddle the horse. He was privy to the murder, as he had seen Robert Enchmarsh fall, and had helped carry his body upstairs. He's still alive, and has sworn to give evidence against Guy if Enchmarsh should require it. He has sworn, also, to keep silence until commanded to speak, and never shall weakness of mine cause that command to be uttered.

"Our engagement was kept a secret. It would have filled the village with dangerous gossip if it had been known in Harpendeane. A few months ago we came to Ewehurst. The curate was dead, and Enchmarsh induced the Rector to appoint Guy in his place. So my future husband has us what he calls 'under his eye.' We didn't publish the betrothal even in Sussex. Secrecy was still advisable, and Guy would never have agreed to our compact if Enchmarsh hadn't promised that the marriage should not take place for a year. The year is not over yet, but my lover thought it right to declare our engagement a few weeks ago."

"Why?"

I interrupted her almost rudely, for I knew what she was about to say.

"Because—because you loved me, Humphrey."

She began to cry, and I bit my lip. There was a long pause. Then I said :

"Do you think Heaven approves this devil's bargain?"

"I can't say, and it doesn't matter to me. I shall carry it through—I shall pay the uttermost farthing."

"But he is a scoundrel, a rake, a brute! You would be happier in hell than at Kitchenhour."

"He's better than he used to be. He has had no—no intrigues since he left Harpendeane."

"But he's a beast, a gambler, a swaggerer, a drunkard. What worse could you have?"

"Oh, don't tempt me; it's all for my brother's sake."

"Your brother!" I cried, grinding my teeth.

"Your brother is a coward, and unworthy of your sacrifice."

"I love him," she sobbed piteously. "You can't understand. You never loved a brother."

"No. But I am sure that Guy Shotover is unworthy of your love. Even Enchmarsh despises him, though he gains by his cowardice. I know I'm speaking brutally, but no brother with the slightest spark of manly feeling would allow his sister to marry a drunken rake in order that he might save his own skin."

"Guy withstood me obstinately at first. I had the greatest difficulty in persuading him. Besides, suppose that he had refused my sacrifice and had

gone to his death, should I have been in a happier case? I should have found myself alone in the world at sixteen, helpless, homeless, and friendless. Enchmarsh would have taken advantage of my helplessness, and I should have met a fate so horrible that I hardly dare think of it. Guy knew all this, or he would never have given in to me."

Was an abject craven ever half so well defended? I looked at once admiringly and despairingly into her brave eyes, while my bosom ached with unshed tears.

"I told you my story," she continued, "that you might understand—and go."

"You told me your story," I cried harshly, "that I might love you a thousand times more than ever. Before this I loved you because you were so beautiful and sweet, because you were—O God!—so child-like. Now I love you because you are a thousand times better and braver than I. You are no child to be pitied and protected. You are the noblest woman that a man ever looked into the eyes of and called blessed."

I sank on one knee before her and kissed the hem of her little gown.

"Humphrey! Humphrey! don't kneel"—and she tugged frantically at my hand to pull me to my feet. "Why won't you stand up? Why won't you leave me? Don't you see that it's because I love you so much that I want you to go? I love you too well to let you be an occasion for sin to me. You can't help me except by your prayers. Go and pray for me."

I rose wearily to my feet. "I am going," I said, but I did not move.

"That br—— Enchmarsh told me you and he are to be married soon," I muttered, after a pause.

"In a month. He's here at Ithornden till next week, when he goes back to Kitchenhour."

"Do you see much of him?"

"Very little, as he practises pistol shooting nearly all day. Go, now, Humphrey, please go."

"I am going. To-morrow I leave Ithornden. Oh, that I could help you, dear! What a useless coward I feel! Why must I flee when I long to fight?"

"Go and pray for me."

I went towards her and held out my hands. Her own hung heavy at her side.

"Let me kiss you."

"No . . . for God's sake! . . ."

A terrible, haunting stillness pervaded the room. Both the candles had flickered out, and in the dusk of mingled firelight and moonlight our hands met. Then I turned from her and went to the door mechanically. On the threshold I paused and looked back.

She was standing by the window, her little hands clenched in anguish, her hair falling over her face and sparing me the sight of her tears.

CHAPTER XV

OF THE METHODIST IN PLURENDEN QUARRY

I COULD not speak to John Palehouse that night, for when I left Ruth he had already gone to bed. But I was resolved to have an interview with him the next morning, and on the whole I was glad of a few hours' meditation before I attempted to leave Ithornden. My heart was torn with conflicting passions. I had promised to leave Ruth—but could I fulfil my promise? It seemed dastardly to desert her in her hour of need, yet my presence was a torture to her rather than a relief.

I went to my little-room and lay down on the bed. I could not sleep, but I did not wish to. I had grown accustomed to my malady of sleeplessness, and though I realised that my health was surely failing under it, bore it with resignation. Besides, it gave me more time for thought, and I felt that this night at any rate would be better spent in thinking than in sleeping.

What was I to do? I pondered a dozen mad schemes, but dismissed them one and all as hopeless. I thought of appealing to Shotover, but entertained the idea only for a moment. The curate

would listen to me, certainly; he would shed tears, perhaps, but fear of death would prevent the great sacrifice that alone could save us. I thought of appealing to Enchmarsh—the next moment I laughed out loud. Were my sufferings crazing me that I should for an instant cherish such a scheme? Should I appeal again to Ruth? Why, fool! She is the most obstinate of the three.

There they stood between me and all hope—the girl, the man, and the coward. The coward was chained by his fear, the man by his hatred, the girl by her love, and it would be difficult to say which was the fastest bound.

There was no help for it, I must leave Ithornden. I must abandon Ruth to her fate. No! That should never be. Ruth's fate was my fate, and I would never leave her to it. There was still a month to elapse before her marriage, and during that month I should not cease to labour for her deliverance. But how could I labour, how could I deliver, shackled as I was by my oath of secrecy? I gnashed my teeth in hopeless frenzy. Then into my mind came Ruth's own words: "Go and pray for me." I believed in prayer and in the God Who hears it. Surely He would help me and Ruth. I had realised by this time that nothing could save us but a re-arrangement of circumstances, the happening of the unexpected. I would trust God for that. I rose from my bed and knelt down beside it. "O Thou that hearest prayer, to Thee shall all flesh come."

A sleepless night is not the best preparation for a troublous day. I could eat no breakfast; my head ached, and my limbs throbbed with fatigue. The morning was grey and cold, and a fierce wind blew from Frittenden. Nevertheless, John Palehouse was eager for a walk in the fields.

It was wonderful how his sweet temper and serenity smoothed the furrows between my eye-brows, and softened the lines of rage and pain about my mouth. He seemed in an unusually peaceful mood. He was even joyful, and took my arm with a smile, and a quick upward look of happiness.

"Where shall we go this sweet morning?"

"Do you call this a sweet morning? I call it dull and unlike summer."

"The sky is grey, but it is beautiful as a wood-pigeon's wing, and see how an occasional flash of sunlight rests on the fields. What a delicious wind is rustling up from the west, and the birds, it is long since I heard them sing so merrily. Oh, it is a wonderful, wonderful day."

His delight was infectious, and I felt a vague comfort in the thought that though I lost Ruth for ever I should still have the green trees and fields, and that even on my death-bed I should see the sky.

We went through Ithornden Park to Brakefields Farm, and struck out across the meadows towards Heartsap. It was then I told Palehouse that I must leave Ithornden because I loved Ruth Shotover.

He listened attentively, and said;

"I knew all this, lad."

"You knew it?"

"Yes. It was plainly written."

"There is one thing, then, that I have learned—a man can't hide his love. I am in love, and Peter Winde, Mary Winde, and John Palehouse, all find out my secret."

"It was not much of a secret. You are a strange lad. Where many a man would tell his thoughts you lock them up in your heart, yet you can't keep them out of your eyes—they're written on your face, and he may run who readeth them."

"I wish I was not in love. But no, I can't say that. Better to have loved hopelessly than have never loved at all."

"My poor boy! I know what it is to love in vain. So you want to leave Ithornden? You are right."

"But I must find some excuse to give Sir Miles."

"I have a good one for you. I have long been anxious about the poor folk at Frittenden. There is a family at Whitsunden Farm the thought of which kills sleep. Tell Sir Miles that I have asked you to continue your journey, to preach at Frittenden, Horsemonden, Bethersden, and to wait for me at Headcorn. I shall soon be able to follow you."

"I shall wait for you at Bethersden," I said. I was resolved not to go further than that from Ruth.

"As you will, lad; but why not at Headcorn?"

"I hope that you will join me before I have time to reach Headcorn."

"When do you start?"

"This afternoon."

"Won't Sir Miles think that rather sudden?"

"I don't care if he does. I must go."

"Perhaps it would be best. I wish that I could go with you;" and he sighed.

"Does your cousin know you are here?"

"He must. But we never see each other, which is fortunate, for if we did I could not stay at Ihorn-den. You see, Humphrey, that I am very weak and unworthy. Do you still insist on leaving me this afternoon?"

"I'm afraid I must."

"And I do wrong in trying to keep you back. Go, and God bless you. Oh, lad, you will often be downcast and weary of your groaning, but believe the words of one who has suffered—there is joy in the world, even for a broken heart."

We had entered a chalk quarry in the corner of a high meadow known as Plurenden. The wind swept it, ruffled our hair over our brows, and danced the poppies on the chalkstone cliffs. The sun burst suddenly through a cloud rift, and John stood in the full glare of it, his hands clasped over mine.

"Yes, lad, joy for the broken heart. God is good, and the earth is green; life is wonderful, and death is sweet. The girl you love is in stronger, tenderer hands than yours, and though you be parted like two meadow streams, remember that all waters mingle in the sea and all lives touch in eternity. 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom,

neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord ; I will joy in the God of my salvation.' ”

His hands closed more tensely over mine, and his eyes looked into mine, full of love and hope and joyousness. Then a cloud veiled the sun, and a wave of darkness rushed over the fields. I heard a footstep behind me, and a voice I knew and hated well.

“ Good morning, my handsome cousin ! This meeting is as opportune as it is unexpected.”

John turned very pale. Enchmarsh stood with his arms folded, his face flushed, his eyes dangerously bright. In his hand he carried a pistol, well grimed with recent use.

“ I’ve been shooting down in Ithornden Park, but it’s as hot as hell in the valley, so I took some wine and came up here to cool myself.”

He had evidently been drinking heavily, so I pulled John’s sleeve, and we moved off.

“ Don’t leave so hurriedly. Stay and speak to me, coz. To think that you and I should have spent forty-eight hours under the same roof, and never have met, though we love each other so dearly. But you have been in the wars, my swashbuckling Methodist, and have tasted a little of the stoning of Stephen.”

“ Let me pass,” said John. “ It is not right or safe ”—the outraged man in him triumphed over

the preacher—"that you and I should speak together."

"Not right? Not safe? Shall you kill me, then, my valiant singer of psalms? Oh, a happy life you would have led my Dolly! She was no Methodist."

Palehouse was silent, and this maddened Enchmarsh, enflamed with wine.

"You won't speak? Then I'll tell you a piece of news. Dolly vowed that she was happier as my mistress than she ever could have been as your wife. There, does that warm your fish's blood?"

"The Lord rebuke you!" said John Palehouse; and I wondered at his calmness, till I saw the mark of his teeth on his nether lip.

"No; Dolly was never made for virtue, nor virtue for Dolly," resumed Enchmarsh; "so they were best apart."

I could restrain my fury no longer, and would have struck the brute down, but John Palehouse seized my arm.

"Do not strike him—he is made in God's image."

Enchmarsh sneered, but the next moment drew back uneasily, for John strode up to him and grasped his wrist.

"Silence, wretch! You have slandered the woman I loved, that I still love, though she died a sinner. You seduced her and betrayed her, and now you smear her name with the filth that should be daubed on yours before the whole world. It was through you that she took the first step in sin, which

led her to the bottomless pit. Before you decoyed her she was pure as snow. The Lord rebuke you."

His mouth quivered with righteous fury; he still held Enchmarsh by the wrist. Then he dropped his hand and his proud head. The Squire stood motionless, panting with rage; suddenly his eyes flashed. He seized John Palehouse by the shoulders, and shook him as a dog shakes a coney; then he struck him furiously with the butt of his pistol.

John fell to the ground without groan or cry. His face was white, his lips were a little parted; and as I gazed at him, petrified, I saw the blood rush under the skin of his temple, and form a little grey bruise there.

"My God!" I cried, and fell on my knees beside him. I thought him only stunned, but an impulse bade me put my hand on his heart. There was no throb.

I felt no grief—it was all so sudden and like a dream—but something seemed to snap in my breast and freeze my eyes. I lifted John's head on to my knee, and gazed down at his peaceful face. Then I raised my eyes to Enchmarsh.

"You are a murderer!"

He did not answer. His nerveless hand had dropped the pistol, his lips trembled, and his eyes were fixed on the dead man's face. For a moment or two we remained silent; gazing at the marble features and limp, lifeless form. His eyes were wide open, and stared up at us, so I closed them gently.

My movement startled Enchmarsh out of the

trance into which he had fallen. I saw a look of terror leap into his eyes, and the next instant he would have rushed from the place, had I not caught him round the legs and held him like a vice. He writhed and struggled, and fell on the ground beside me. Over and over we rolled together, silent except for our panting. Enchmarsh fought like a wild beast, but, though by no means so powerful as he, I was more agile, and contrived to keep uppermost in the struggle. At last I managed to pin him beneath me, and he lay helpless, with my knee on his chest and my hands on his throat.

"This shall be your last crime, you blackguard! You have betrayed the innocent and oppressed the helpless, and no man gave you your reward. But your career is ended with the murder of John Palehouse."

"Take your hands off my throat!" he panted.
"You're choking me."

"I shall keep my hands where they are till I see you in custody. There are some labourers working in Coarsebarn field. I shall shout for them, and if you move an inch I'll throttle you."

"Shout, then, you beast! But, remember—if you have me arrested, I'll have Guy Shotover hanged. I have power to hang him——"

"I know that."

"How do you know?"

"Never mind how I know—and you may hang Shotover as high as Haman for all I care. He's nothing to me."

I paused a moment after I had said this, for I remembered that, though Shotover was nothing to me, he was the brother of the girl who was all things to me, and into my mind came her words : " I loved Guy more than my happiness—more than I hated Enchmarsh." I should show myself unworthy of Ruth if I sacrificed her brother to my revenge. My dearest friend had been brutally murdered, but I had no right to demand vengeance at such a price. Into Guy's grave would go his sister's youth, hope, and happiness. She had given up all that makes life sweet in order to spare him the doom to which I, who swore I loved her, was about to send him to gratify my ungodlike passions.

I meditated with my hands on Enchmarsh's throat, while the wind sang in the grass, and suddenly I remembered the bargain my enemy had made with Ruth over Robert Enchmarsh's body at Harpendeane, and I realised that if I followed his example, it was in my power to free her from this scoundrel she hated, and yet spare her another drop in the cup which was already overbrimming with tears.

" Listen, you blackguard. I said that Shotover was nothing to me, but for his sister's sake he must not be allowed to perish. If you set Ruth Shotover free from her engagement, and at the same time hold your tongue as to the curate's affair, I'll keep silence as to what you did for John Palehouse."

" Ugh-gh—you're choking me——"

" Nonsense. Do you accept my offer ?"

"I'm damned if I give up Ruth for you to marry her."

"You'll have to give her up, anyhow. It's only a question of whether you and Shotover go scot-free, or whether you both hang."

"It's a devil's bargain!" He writhed, and the grip of my hands tightened on his windpipe. He was soon lying quiet as a lamb.

"You'd better not struggle," I said grimly. "Come, give me a straight answer. Will you lose Ruth Shotover and your life together, while enjoying your revenge, or will you lose her and live—without revenge?"

"I suppose life's better worth having than vengeance," he said sulkily.

"That's for you to decide—and be quick about it."

"Then I'll live and hold my tongue; and now, for God's sake, take your hands off my throat."

"We must settle matters more definitely first."

"Oh, anything you like—I'll swear—Ugh-gh——"

"I want something more trustworthy than your oath. You shall write out a full confession of your crime."

"Yes—at Ihornden."

"No—here."

"Why not at Ihornden?" The fellow knew that he could easily give me the slip once we were out of the quarry.

"Because I intend to have it here."

"But I've not even a piece of paper."

"That's a lie. You have a note-book in your

pocket;" and I pulled it out. "I can lend you a pencil."

"I can't write it lying on my back, while you're half strangling me, you beast!"

"Sit up, then."

I relaxed the grip of my hands and the pressure of my knee sufficiently to allow him to raise himself.

"There, you can write now, and, remember, I'll throttle the life out of you if you move an inch."

He began to write in the note-book at my dictation :

"I, Harold Enchmarsh——"

I had seen his handwriting on several occasions, and knew that the round, bold letters he was forming were merely an attempt to make the document valueless. I pressed my fingers on his windpipe, and the next moment he had dropped the pencil and paper, and was writhing between my knees.

"You scoundrel! I'm not the fool you think me. Write in your usual hand—I know it well—or I'll shout for help, and deliver you over to justice, come what may."

He sat up, looking very white and ill, and wrote, his hands trembling because of the grip of mine :

"I, Harold Enchmarsh, hereby declare that I murdered my cousin, John Palehouse, by striking him on the temple with a pistol in Plurenden Quarry, on the fourteenth of July, 1799."

I bade him tear out the leaf; then I took my

hands from his throat, leaving blue finger-marks on the skin, and thrust the paper into my pocket.

"You can go now."

"What shall you do with that?" he said hoarsely, pointing to John Palehouse.

I considered.

"I can account for his death in a fall from the top of the quarry, and for the bruise on his forehead in one of the stones scattered round about——"

I ceased speaking suddenly, for the grief which had been waiting outside my heart till rage had left it now stole in, and choked my voice. Enchmarsh stood by me in silence, his hands clasped round his throat. As I looked at him, I was seized with an unholy joy that I had punished the villain so well.

"What are you going to do?" he asked faintly

"I shall run to Coarsebarn Farm and tell the folk that my friend has had a fall into Plurenden Quarry, and is dead. As for you, you had better be off at once"—it was my great ambition to get the brute away. "On your first opportunity release Ruth Shotover from her engagement, and remember that if you move a finger against her or her brother, I produce my evidence—and many a man has been hanged on less."

"Ruth Shotover"—he stood repeating the name and biting his nails—"Ruth Shotover—Ruth Enchmarsh—Ruth Lyte. Oh, damn you!"

"Be off!" I cried. "Remember that I carry your death."

He threw me a fierce glance of hatred; then he

John Palehouse believed to have met his death through a fall into Plurenden Quarry, then—oh, blessed thought! it sent the blood to my cheeks and the tears to my eyes.

Suddenly, as I ran, I became aware of footsteps following me, and of voices calling me to stop. I turned my head. The little lane was steep and rough. I stumbled in a rut, and fell prone. The next minute a pair of hands were on my shoulders, pinning me to the ground, while my legs were seized and held forcibly, and a voice I seemed to have heard before exclaimed :

“ Now we have you, my fine fellow !”

What with the violence of my fall and the unexpectedness of all that had happened, I lay for a second or two utterly bewildered, without power of speech. At last, however, I managed to turn my head, and looked, dumbfounded, into the face of Curate Kitson.

“ What—what the devil is this ?” I stammered.

“ Yes, indeed. What—what the devil is it ?” mocked Kitson.

“ Will you let me get up ?”

“ All in good time. Leave go his legs, Pitcher ; he had better stand. He can’t very well speak with his mouth full of dust.”

The grip on my ankles was relaxed, and I rose painfully to my feet. Kitson stood before me, with two farm labourers. One of these, as soon as I was upright, pinned my arms to my sides. I was evidently regarded as a dangerous subject.

"Will you do me the favour of explaining all this?" I cried hotly.

"Oh, certainly," drawled Kitson. "We have just discovered the corpse of your fellow-Ranter, Palehouse, in Plurenden Quarry."

"He fell over the edge . . . he is dead. . . . I'm on my way to Coarsebarn Farm for help."

"Yes, you seemed in a demned hurry."

"I suppose you think I murdered him?" I cried angrily, for by this time I had guessed the reason of their violence.

"Well, such an idea did cross our minds, I must confess."

"It's a lie! My friend fell into the quarry, as I've told you, and dashed his head against a stone."

My lips were accustomed to speak the truth, and stammered horribly over the lie. Kitson grinned.

"I should be quite ready to believe you if it were not for this," and he took a pistol out of his pocket.

I turned pale. I had forgotten the pistol, and must have left it on the ground beside John Palehouse, fool that I was—oh, thrice a fool! Thanks to my idiocy, everything would be discovered. The pistol would be recognised as Enchmarsh's; he would be arrested, Shotover hanged, and Ruth's heart broken—oh, fool, fool! A hundred times a fool.

Suddenly I started, and looked closer; then my jaw dropped, and the sweat beaded out on my forehead. The pistol was MINE.

How had it come into Enchmarsh's hands? Was

it indeed my pistol that had killed John Palehouse? I stood absolutely dumbfounded, but saw that I must rise to the occasion. My first impulse was to betray Enchmarsh, but I thought of the consequences, and refrained. There was surely some other way of clearing myself of this hateful charge. If I did not think of it now I should think of it later. I had no right to wreck Ruth's happiness simply because I was in danger.

"Well," drawled Kitson, "how much paler, and how much redder, and how much more sweat?"

I saw that my emotion was damning me, so fought it down.

"Well," continued the curate, "how do you account for the pistol?"

"I must have dropped it."

"Yes—and fractured the butt."

He held out the pistol and showed me a deep crack across the butt. With such force must Enchmarsh have struck John Palehouse.

"Do you still deny that you are a murderer?"

"I do."

"Perhaps you deny that this is your pistol?"

"No, I don't deny that." Such a course would have been useless, as my initials were engraved on the butt, and every one at Ithornden knew the weapon to be mine.

"It is just as well not to tell more lies than you can help. We won't keep you here any longer. Your reverence shall see the inside of a jail for once in your saintly life. But we must have a warrant

of commitment first. 'Let all things be done decently and in order,' as the Apostle says. So off with you to Sir Miles Wychellow."

I was quite ready, for I felt sure that I should easily be able to clear myself before the kind magistrate, who knew of my love for John Palehouse and the good character I had hitherto borne.

The two farm men instantly gripped me by the shoulders and marched me up Heartsap Hill. They were great rough fellows, and seemed to relish their work. They had doubtless been among the rioters on Biddenden Common, and rejoiced to wreak their spite on the hated Methodist. The curate walked beside us, his lip curling slightly. He, too, delighted in the hour of revenge.

I held my head high, for I felt confident. In fact, the only thing that perplexed me was—how had Enchmarsh come by my pistol? Had he been using it in mistake for his own? Had his own been damaged, and had he taken mine, rather than ask a favour of me? Or—desperate thought!—had he intended to murder John Palehouse, and deliberately made use of my pistol, so that he might avert suspicion from himself and fix it on me, and thus kill two birds with one stone—his cousin and his rival?

We had reached Ihornden before I could answer any of these questions. The servant who opened the door fell back in surprise at the sight of my escort, but neither I nor Kitson vouchsafed any explanation. The curate asked for Sir Miles, and on being told that he was out, requested to be shown

a room where he and his prisoner—a slight accent on the word “prisoner,” which made the servant stare yet more blankly—could await his return. We were ushered into a small room looking out on the terrace. Kitson and the two labouring men sat at the table, while I flung myself on a bench near the window.

My spirits were somewhat dashed by an hour’s waiting—in fact, they soon fell very low indeed—for after some thought, I came to the conclusion that I should not find it so easy to clear myself as I had imagined. I was resolved not to speak a word that might lead to Guy Shotover’s arrest, and it seemed as if only by such a word I could be saved. I spent the hour that followed in imaginary conversations with Squire Wychellow, every one of which ended in my betraying Enchmarsh—and with him Shotover. My only safe course seemed to be to hold my tongue.

The sky grew greyer, and gusts of rain beat against the windows. A dog howled to the accompaniment of the wind, and every now and then a door slammed in a distant part of the house. Kitson and my guards talked in low voices, as if cowed by the uncanniness of the day. A cart had been sent to fetch the body of John Palehouse, and the men who drove it had gone forth pale and wide-eyed, starting at every sound. Horror was in the wind and in the house. A gust blew the leaves off the trees as if autumn had come, and they danced on the terrace a dance of death.

At last the horrible wind brought us the sound of coach-wheels, and Sir Miles's coach rolled up to the door. From the window I could see Lady Wychelow dismount, followed by her husband, Guy Shot-over, and Ruth.

Kitson rose, and went to meet the magistrate in the hall. I still gazed out of the window, for Ruth was still standing where I could see her.

Sir Miles entered in great perturbation, rubbing his hands, as was his habit when excited.

"What the devil is all this?" he cried. "Surely there's some mistake!"

I was at a loss what to say, so fixed my eyes on the floor, and answered him not a word.

Sir Miles looked mystified.

"Give your evidence," he said abruptly, turning to Kitson.

The curate gave his evidence, which was confirmed by the working men Pitcher and Green.

"Do you wish to contradict anything these gentlemen have said?"

"No."

"You confess that you killed Palehouse?"

"No!" I cried sharply, lifting my head.

Sir Miles knit his brows.

"Begad, Mr. Kitson! your evidence is clear enough, but I'm loth to disbelieve this young man."

"Why, he's as big a liar as Ananias!" cried the curate, roused by hatred out of his usual state of insolent calm. "He has already told us several lies. You don't deny that, do you?"—turning to me.

"No."

Sir Miles glanced at me impatiently.

"Begad, sir! I'm sick of your 'no.' What has come over you?"

My heart was too full for speech, so I only stared at the ground. The squire shrugged his shoulders.

"He looks hang-dog enough. But when I first met him he was risking his life and limb to save the man you say he has just murdered. He and Palehouse loved each other like brothers——"

"No doubt it was a sudden quarrel. These Ranters are always as hot-tempered as Old Harry—and who killed Palehouse if not this fellah?"

"Perhaps he fell from the top of the quarry?"

Kitson grinned. "Mr. Lyte did not make that statement with—er—sufficient calmness for me to believe it. Besides, what of the pistol?"

"Is this pistol yours, young man?"

"Yes, Sir Miles."

The squire shook his head.

"I've sent for a doctor from Cranbrook to examine the body; and, of course, there will be an inquest, when we shall be told whether the bruise on Palehouse's forehead has anything to do with Mr. Lyte's pistol. In the meantime——"

"He must go to jail," drawled the curate, who evidently enjoyed heaping every insult on me.

Sir Miles flushed.

"I fear so. The charge is serious. Young man, I am loth to commit you, but you leave me no choice."

He stood for a moment in thought. "Come, Sir Miles, the warrant," said Kitson sweetly.

Swearing under his breath, the squire moved slowly towards his writing-table. The warrant was made out, and I was locked into an attic till the constable should arrive from Biddenden to take me in charge.

Here I had ample time for reflection—the constable was a leisurely man—and I cannot say that the hours passed pleasantly. Hitherto I had been racking my brains for some way of clearing myself without involving Enchmarsh. I had realised that this would be difficult, but now I saw that it would be impossible. I could not establish my innocence without sending Enchmarsh—and with him, Guy Shotover—to the gallows.

I saw that even now it would be comparatively easy to put matters straight. Enchmarsh must be somewhere in the house, the marks of my fingers must still be on his throat, no one would question the authenticity of the confession in my pocket, and the presence of my pistol in Plurenden Quarry could no doubt be satisfactorily explained. I could certainly save myself if I pleased—but ought I to do so?

The question rose stern and baffling, and I trembled before it. Shotover's arrest would certainly follow my betrayal of Enchmarsh. I thought of Ruth's face as I had last seen it, her eyes full of pleading, her lips quivering with unselfish love. She had given up all that makes life worth living

to save her brother. Had I the cruelty to make her sacrifice of none effect?

"Ah, but it is because I love her!" I cried in answer to my own thoughts. "Surely she had rather lose her brother than lose me—surely she loves me more than that abject coward."

"True," replied the inward voice; "doubtless she loves you more, but she has loved you all these past weeks and yet she has sacrificed you to her brother. She could any day have banished Enchmarsh and have given herself to you, but she would not, because to do so would have meant the death of her brother, who loved life."

"She naturally shrank from uttering his death-sentence with her own lips, but if he perished through words of mine——"

"She would despise you for ever."

"But I should be dooming him only indirectly. He would owe his death to Enchmarsh——"

"And to you. If you speak you speak with the full knowledge that your words will hang him."

I groaned. A year ago I should have been glad to die. But this day happiness, love, and heart's desire had been put within my reach, and it was cruel to have them snatched from me. Oh, I must speak, I must live, come what may!

Then I pictured my meeting with Ruth after I had spoken. She would look at me with sad, reproachful eyes.

"Dear," I should cry, "I did it all for your happiness."

And she would answer kindly, perhaps, but sadly :

"No doubt you did it for the best, but that makes it no less hard for me to lose my brother—and my confidence in my lover."

I sat in silence, my head sunk on my breast, my hands clasped between my knees. Whatever course I adopted, Ruth was bound to suffer. The question I had to consider was—which would cause her least misery? Surely she would rather lose her brother. But not through me, for that way she lost me too. If I betrayed Shotover I could never be to Ruth what I had been before. All her faith in me, her trust, her reverence, would be gone.

Then there were other considerations. I had told Enchmarsh that Guy Shotover was nothing to me, but now I realised that at the bottom of my heart lurked a sort of sneaking affection for the fellow. It was true that his weakness and cowardice stood between me and all hope, but I could not forget that he had befriended me when I was friendless, and taken me into his house, fed me, washed my feet with his own hands, and had made me sleep in his own bed. Besides, I could not deny that the man was lovable, that he was gentle, simple-hearted, and devoted to holy things. But the chief point in his favour was that he was my benefactor. One had scruples about sending one's benefactor to jail.

So love and honour bade me be silent, to suffer death rather than speak. After all, the evidence against me being purely circumstantial, it was

possible that the county magistrates might not think it safe to give a petty jury the chance of convicting me.

But if I betrayed Shotover I sent him to certain death—and what would become of Ruth when he was hanged? I should be too poor to marry her for years to come, and she had no relations living. Doubtless the Wychellows would care for her; nevertheless, her lot would be a hard one. I had no right to condemn her to it.

No. I must be silent. I saw my way plainly—the way of silence. Love and honour tied my tongue, bade me suffer, and if need be, die. So I fell on my knees and commended my resolution to God, asking Him to help me, who, without Him, was helpless.

After that I felt calmer, and sat listening to the sweet songs of the birds, till a step outside my prison made me start. The next moment the door was unlocked, and Sir Miles Wychellow came in.

“The doctor has arrived from Cranbrook,” he said abruptly. “He has examined Palehouse and he has examined your pistol, and swears that the death of one is due to a blow from t’other.”

There was dead silence. I had risen, and stood shuffling my feet uneasily. Sir Miles laid his hand on my shoulder.

“Come, my lad,” he said, very kindly, “I’m sure you can explain all this if you choose. Make a clean breast of it. Did you kill Palehouse?”

“No.”

"But, young man, there's little use in saying 'no.' You must give us facts."

He waited for a moment, then, as I remained silent, continued: "Did you and Palehouse meet anyone near Plurenden?"

"No."

"You and he were alone together the whole of your walk?"

"Yes."

"That's bad! If Palehouse and you were alone the whole morning, why——" he hesitated.

"Yes," I replied, "the conclusion is natural enough."

"I can't understand you," said Sir Miles; "you are either a fool or a liar."

I was both, but I would not tell him so.

"Come, lad, why so proud and silent? If you're guilty, confess. Perhaps there are extenuating circumstances."

His voice was so gentle, and he patted my shoulder so kindly that I was cut to the heart, and could not answer him.

"You won't answer me? Well, so be it," and he went off, shaking his head.

I paced miserably up and down the room, now and then singing a verse of "Jesu, Lover of my Soul" to comfort my fainting heart. Rain began to fall, and the clouds rolled back from the face of the sun, so that an angry copper glare streamed upon the rain. The west was bloody and ragged as if the sun were setting in wrath. In about half an

hour my prison door opened, and Sir Miles came back to tell me that the constable had arrived from Biddenden, and would take me off to the village lock-up.

I followed the magistrate to the hall, where the constable was waiting with gyves. I winced at the sight of these, but schooled myself to submission and held out my hands. I noticed that Guy Shot-over was skulking at the further end of the hall. When we were about to leave the house, he came forward and whispered a few words to Sir Miles.

"Egad! I had forgotten," said the baronet. "Wait a moment, my man, the prisoner has had no food since morning."

I had been so highly wrought that I had not noticed how hungry I was. My needs had occurred to no one but Guy, and his solicitude was characteristic of him. The constable made no objection to waiting while I had some supper. I ate in silence, and had soon finished. Guy shook hands with me, and asked me if I had any money. I told him that I had enough, and he begged me to borrow of him if ever I should be in need.

The sun was sinking fast when we left the house, and went down the avenue. We were nearly at the gate when a white figure suddenly flashed into the copper glare of the sunset. It was Ruth. I do not know whether she was out on purpose to see me, or whether I had come upon her unawares. She did not speak, but drew aside to let us pass, while she stared in horror at my gyves. Her eyes were red

with crying, and the sight of her was as hot iron on a raw wound. I looked into her face and tried to speak, but the words froze on my tongue. Did she believe me guilty or innocent? I longed to ask her, but had not the courage.

In a quarter of an hour we reached Biddenden, and I spent the tramp in racking my brains for a safe way of disposing of Enchmarsh's confession, for I knew that as soon as I reached the lock-up I should be searched. The paper was in the breast-pocket of my coat, and I wondered if I could slip it into a safer place without the constable noticing me. He did not seem a very observant fellow. He walked beside me half asleep, his eyes nearly shut.

"Wot yer doing, young man?" he cried suddenly.

"Tying my shoe-lace," I replied, as I slipped Enchmarsh's confession from my pocket into my stocking.

"I can't have no loitering, come on!"

I obeyed, well satisfied; and a few minutes later we entered Biddenden. The men had not yet come back from the fields, and the street was deserted, save for a few women and children, who stared curiously at me and whispered among themselves. I was marched past the church and the inn to the village lock-up—a tiny dark cell, the floor rough and dirty, the walls trickling with damp.

I had not expected a very thorough search, and the constable did little more than bid me turn out my pockets. Having satisfied himself as to their

contents, he went off, locking the door. I groped my way to a bench set against the wall, which was the only furniture the place contained, and gave myself up to thought. I decided to let Enchmarsh's confession stay where it was for the present, as I might be searched again.

The stars came out, and the hush of night fell on all things, but I was too sorrowful to sleep. My heart was full of bitter longing for John Palehouse. I had hitherto been too much engrossed in my difficulties to pine for him ; but now that the questions which had tormented me were answered, now that I had taken the roughest of the two roads before which I had stood hesitating, my heart was open to grief and craving, and I brooded miserably. It was terrible to think that all men believed I had killed him, my dearest friend, for whom I would have willingly laid down my life. To be charged with such a crime was only a degree less awful than to have committed it.

Day dawned after what seemed an eternity, and about nine o'clock the constable appeared with a bowl of gruel for my breakfast, and told me that the inquest had already taken place, and that a verdict of "wilful murder" had been brought against me. At noon I appeared before the local magistrates, who, after hearing the detailed and conclusive evidence of Kitson, Pitcher, and Green, committed me for trial at the Maidstone assizes. I was taken back to my dirty little cell, and there I sat, hot and depressed, till at twilight the bolt was shot back and

the constable, muffled in many wraps, bade me tumble up, for I was to go to Maidstone by the night coach.

The fresh air was sweet after the stuffiness of my prison. It fanned my hot cheeks gratefully; it soothed me into a happier frame of mind.

We reached the cross-roads near Three Chimneys after a few minutes' walk. Here we were to wait till the Maidstone coach went by. The sun had set, and the sky was blue-grey, except for dark masses of cloud, and for a faint glow of red and orange in the west. It had been raining, and the hedges, fields, and trees were wet, and great pools shone on the road in the twilight. The fold star hung above Chittenden, and the wind crept with a moaning whisper over the fields, and rustled the grasses by the wayside. Every now and then a burst of summer lightning showed me the meadows and spinneys lying in their night stillness, showed me High Tilt and Hareplain, and the roofs of Castwisell, and all the dear places where John Palehouse and I had roamed together. I thought of my friend lying silent and peaceful at Ithornden Hall, his white hands folded on his breast; and the thought no longer tortured, but soothed me. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." His sufferings were over, the chastening hand was lifted from his back and sides, the cup of deadly wine was withdrawn from his lips. No longer would he sorrow for the beautiful unworthy woman he had loved, no longer would he travail in prayers and

tears for the thankless souls of men, no longer would he starve, and tramp, and toil. "Yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours."

A rumble of wheels drew near, and at last the coach rolled into view, and pulled up at a signal from the constable. The outside was crowded, so we were forced to go inside, which I hated, for the summer night was glorious, hot and still, and the interior of the coach was stuffy, and full of noise and smell. Moreover, my fellow passengers had little relish for travelling with a man who wore gyves on his wrists; and though the constable assured her that I was "perfectly tractable, madam," one old lady removed herself and her belongings to the further end of the coach, and declared that she would not be able to sleep a wink all night, for she was sure that I should murder her if ever she closed an eye.

I sat in a kind of stupor, while the coach lurched and jolted over ruts. A lamp hanging from the roof swung with every roll and cast weird shadows on the faces of my companions. Near Headcorn I fell asleep, and dreamed a strange, jumbled dream about Ithornden and Shoyswell, Ruth Shotover, Mary Winde, and John Palehouse. Then I dreamed that I was dead, and stood as a disembodied spirit in Shoyswell fold. I woke with a shudder. The wheels were jolting over cobbles, and houses reared their gables against a sky yellow with moonlight. We had reached Maidstone.

The coach drew up at the Star Inn, and the

constable, swearing that he had never been so thirsty in his life, led me into the bar. He was a kindly fellow, and offered to stand me a glass of ale, for which I was grateful, as both my soul and body were faint enough.

In spite of the late hour the bar was crowded to overflowing. I sat in an obscure corner, the constable's burly figure shutting out the rest of the company, whose talk, songs, and laughter came to me as in a dream. I had soon finished my ale, and leaned back with closed eyes. I had nearly fallen into a doze when I heard close by me a feeble twitter, the ghost of a lark's rising song. I lifted my eyes and saw above my head a tiny cage in which a lark was imprisoned. There was barely room for him to turn, and every now and then he dashed his little body against the bars with the force of desperation. Occasionally he tried to sing—the old glad song with which he had flown up into the face of God—but the notes were piteous, and died off in a haunting cry. Poor little heart! How I pitied it with its ruffled breast and round, frightened eyes. I had seen larks rise from the Sussex fields; I had been awakened by the stirring of their wings.

Then the thought came to me that in an hour's time I should be even as this lark—a prisoner, beating in vain against iron bars. Poor little heart! You and I are brethren.

The constable interrupted my reverie.

"Come, young feller, no more starin' at that tedious bird, but off with yer to jail!"

With that he marched me through a crowd of curious mocking faces into the fresh air and moonlight. A few minutes' walk brought us to a huge grey building with shackles hung over the door. Before the constable had told me I knew this was the jail, and my heart sank.

The formalities that preceded my admission were short, and owing to the time of night, sleepy. Shackles were no longer worn by the prisoners, so mine were struck off, much to my relief, and I was led down a series of dark, stuffy passages to an iron door.

I held my breath, but the next moment gasped it forth in horror. The opening of the door revealed a terrible sight—a room in which sleeping men lay together like beasts. The window was unglazed, nevertheless the atmosphere was noisome. Accustomed as I was to living and sleeping in the open air, the idea of such quarters chilled my blood. For a long time after the jailer had locked the door, I stood motionless, with covered face, shivering like a girl.

At last I managed to control my disgust, and started to pick my way across the room, warily and shrinkingly, like one who crossed a battlefield the day after the fight. I touched a man's head with my foot, and he swore, but did not wake. At last I reached a spot where there was room for me to lie down. Fortunately, I was exhausted after two nights' sleeplessness, for it would have crazed me to lie wakeful in that hell.

CHAPTER XVII

OF THE METHODIST IN PRISON

THE sound of laughter mingled with my dreams, and I awoke. A number of men were standing round me, and they laughed again at my mystified face; for at first I had no idea where I was. Remembrance came all too soon, and with a groan I struggled to my feet.

"When did you come here? Answer civilly," said a tall, thin fellow, who seemed to be the leader of the rest.

"About midnight."

"What's your name?"

"Lyte."

"What are you here for?"

"On a charge of murder."

"Just as I told the lads while you were sleeping. You've a reg'lar murderer's phiz. Think you're likely to get off?"

"I can't say."

"Are you one of us?"—and he addressed me in a strange jargon I could not understand, evidently thieves' cant.

I shook my head.

"Then what are you? Anything in the smashing line?"

"No; I'm a Methodist preacher."

A roar of laughter burst from my audience.

"A Methodee! A Methodee! The devil! but we'll be having daily prayers now. Are you saved?"

"Sing hey for the Methodist parson;
Sing ho for the Ranter bold!
He kissed my wife——"

"Hold your damn noise, will you?" cried my questioner. "I want to find out something more about the cove. Where's your little Bethel?"

"I have no chapel. I'm a travelling preacher."

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-one."

"You're young for holiness." Then he put his face close to mine, and winked. "Any pretty girl to love you?"

I flushed angrily, and was silent.

"Come, now; won't you tell us whether she's dark or fair."

"I refuse to answer any more of your questions. What right have you to pester me in this way?"

"I advise you to be civil, young feller. We lads aren't over gentle with the young and insolent. But never mind; you've said your catechism like a good boy, and I'll leave you alone till I've had some beer."

With that he went off to the other end of the room, or "ward," where a bottle was going round.

A church clock close by struck nine, and I realised that I was very hungry. But I had rather starve than mix with the rough, profane crowd, devouring and swilling meat and beer a few yards off. I lay down in the cleanest spot I could find, and gave myself up to thought.

I took advantage of my comparative solitude to slip Enchmarsh's confession out of my stocking—by no means a convenient hiding-place—back into my pocket. I had been searched, in a very perfunctory manner, on my arrival at the jail, and did not expect the ordeal to be repeated till I was brought up for trial.

The sun rose higher, and fell with such fierceness on the stones where I lay that I was forced to creep into the shade. Here three men were stretched, talking so foully that I hurriedly left them for the crowd, who, I felt sure, had not viler tongues than they.

I found every one drowning their cares, and was invited to join them. But I suffered no less from hunger than from thirst, and asked for some food.

"Have you any coin?" was the immediate question.

"Yes; but why?"

"Why? Because you can't have any prog till you tip us the blunt."

"I thought rations were provided by the prison authorities."

"Do prime tripe and ham pie look like rations provided by the prison authorities, as you're kind

enough to call a pack of blessed old fools and knaves? No, my man, this 'ere tripe and this 'ere pie have come from the Lock and Fetters over the way, and must be paid for in cash down."

"What does the prison provide in the way of food?"

"Not enough for you to live on. No one lives on prison rations unless they wants to escape hanging. So which will you have, young feller, tripe or pie?"

"I'll have some tripe. But I shall be ruined at this rate."

"Haven't you any pals to keep you?"

"I don't wish to be kept by my friends."

"Oh, we're a bit of a game-cock, are we? Never mind; starvation will soon lower our crest."

I did not answer, but fell to my helping of tripe, supplemented by a mug of very bad ale. For this meal I was obliged to pay just double the price I should have paid under ordinary circumstances, which made my heart sink, as I had only a few shillings left, and hated the thought of borrowing.

The sun rose higher and the room grew hotter. By noon the atmosphere was suffocating, and men lay stretched on the floor, panting like beasts. My lips were cracked with thirst, for the ale was finished. Outside in the street a girl was selling fruit, and every now and then her voice floated into the stifling room and mocked us—

"Ripe cherries! I cry,
Who'll buy, who'll buy?"

I opened my Bible, and tried to find comfort, but my head ached, and I felt deadly sick.

At last the evening came and the horrible sun left us for a bloody setting. Darkness fell and the stars glittered. Far away in the fields the dew was shining, and the wind was rustling the grass. I thought of the beech-woods where I had so often spent the night, of the rabbits that used to waken me by scampering over my body, of the toadstools, orange, yellow, and speckled, that used to spring up round me while I slept. Perhaps I should never see the fields and woods again, perhaps I had enjoyed my last of singing birds, rustling grass, falling dew, and scampering conies.

I was seized with a desperate longing for the open air. I could have rushed at that stern iron door, shaken it, kicked it, beaten out my brains against it. Why, because a fellow man is a murderer and a coward, must I lose all that makes life sweet? I can endure this horrible captivity no longer; I must go back to the fields and the wind. Next time the jailer comes round I shall ask to see the governor; I shall show him Enchmarsh's confession; I shall demand Enchmarsh's arrest; I—get thee behind me, Satan! I am here for love's sake, and God is love, and God has said: "Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall keep it unto life eternal."

There were no beds in the ward, only a few rugs, and these were dirty and verminous. I shuddered at the thought of spending a night under one of them,

but an icy wind had sprung up, and seemed to pierce my very bones.

I was standing watching my miserable companions lie down and huddle together like cattle in winter, when some one touched my elbow. I looked round, and saw a young fellow of ragged yet genteel appearance, whom I had noticed very drunk that morning.

"Excuse me, but you seem to have no friends in this place. May I offer you a share of my rug?"

"Thank you kindly, but I must not put you to such discomfort."

"There will be no discomfort; on the contrary, I shall be all the warmer for an extra bedfellow."

"An *extra* bedfellow?"

"I have one mate already, but he's so dirty that I daren't lie closer to him than I can help. Do accept my offer. Rugs are scarce, and you can't sleep without one, for the nights are as cold as the days are stifling."

I was grateful for his kindness, and availed myself of it. We lay down under an exceedingly filthy rug, and soon were joined by a dirty foul-tongued wretch, who plagued us for an hour or more with stories of the various bedfellows he had had in Lewes jail, which were neither amusing nor edifying. About eleven o'clock there was silence, and we all tried to sleep.

I hardly closed my eyes. All round me men snored and shivered, moaned and cursed. Every now and then a fellow would scream, and some of the

younger ones sobbed in their sleep. In spite of the cold the atmosphere was stifling, and we lay so close that I could not stir without touching the flesh of other men. One of my bedfellows was, as I have already said, filthy in the extreme, and even the other was far from clean—I was not clean myself; it was impossible to be clean in such a place.

Oh, the indescribable wretchedness of that night! I panted and shivered at one and the same time; I longed and prayed for morning, though I knew it would bring only a change of evils. The lad at my side moaned, tossed, tumbled, and raved. Every now and then he would, to my surprise, murmur a sentence from the English Prayer Book: "That it may please Thee to have mercy on all prisoners and captives, and on all who are desolate and oppressed"—"We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings. . . . Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father." "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in a place of darkness and in the deep . . . Free among the dead, like unto those that are wounded and lie in the grave, who are out of remembrance." He talked louder and more frequently than anyone else, and occasionally a restless prisoner would wake him with a kick or a blow, and bid him hold his tongue and be damned.

Surely sleeplessness and suffering would eventually drive me mad! But God is very merciful, and just as my brain was reeling and my heart breaking under my burden of loneliness, pain, and longing, He sent sweet thoughts of my dead friend to cheer

me. I realised how near he was to me, though death divided us, how he was now one of the cloud of witnesses who gazed on my struggle and helped me by their prayers. And when the white, trembling dawn showed up the prison bars, a strange, half-fearful peace crept into my soul and whispered, as the light grew stronger and stronger, and showed me plainer and plainer the dirt, degradation, and misery in the midst of which I lay: "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove, which is covered with silver wings, and her feathers like gold."

So in spite of the horrors of that night, I rose in a fairly peaceful frame of mind. Most of my companions lay till a late hour, for to many the sleep which had been denied them in the darkness came with the dawn, and by the reddening light I saw them lying in the stillness of exhaustion, their sorrow-stamped faces showing how bitter were their dreams.

About eight o'clock the ward was too noisy for any more sleeping. The sleepers awoke, stretched, cursed, groaned, and staggered, half-blind with drowsiness, to where an early jug of ale was going from mouth to mouth. I would have none of it. My stock of shillings was very low, and as I was not hungry, I resolved to live that day on prison fare. This, which consisted of a small loaf and half a pint of water, was brought to me half an hour later, and I sat down to breakfast in a distant corner.

Here I was joined by my friend of the night. He

brought a bowl of porridge, which he insisted on sharing with me. He evidently wished to make friends, and though at first I was inclined to be reserved, I soon began to take an interest in him. He seemed to have had some education, and his language was clean.

"I hope I did not disturb you much last night," he said. "I fear that I rave terribly in my sleep."

"You talked a good deal—especially about the Prayer Book."

He flushed scarlet, then said in a low voice :

"I was once a clergyman."

I was too much taken aback to reply.

"Yes," he continued, "for eighteen months I was Vicar of Rowfant."

"Why, that is in Sussex ! I come from Sussex too !"

"I knew it—I knew it by your speech. You have the Sussex drawl."

"Which is not pretty."

"No. But it is like home. It was that which made me take kindly to you at once. You reminded me of the old days."

I did not care to ply indiscreet questions, so was silent, hoping that he would of his free will tell me more. I was not disappointed, for after a few minutes' silence he said :

"Yes, I was ordained very young, and appointed to a living in the gift of a friend of my father's, Harold Macaulay——"

"What ! You know Macaulay ?"

"Yes. Do you?"

"Too well."

"So do I—too well."

"You do not speak as if you loved him."

"I hate him—I had a little sister, and——"

"I understand. Have you heard that he has changed his name? He is now Squire Enchmarsh of Kitchenhour, in Sussex."

"I know it, and I shall give Sussex a wide birth, or I may one day find myself in jail for murder. But to go on with my story—there's not much more of it. Soon after my appointment to Rowfant Vicarage, some terrible sorrows came upon me. I lost my sister—not through death—and my mother, whom I loved above all things, died of sickness brought on by grief. I was half crazed with misery, and I did not seek comfort in God—I sought it in wine. My parishioners found me drunk again and again, and at last I grew so ashamed that I sent in my resignation to the Bishop, and went to live where I could no longer offend Christ's flock by my evil example. I soon fell into want, and one day I faced starvation. I fought with the anguish for twenty-four hours, but my better nature was weakened by indulgence, and in the evening I stole a piece of bread."

"And you were caught?"

"Caught in the act, and I remember that when they arrested me I wept, not because I was a prisoner, and likely to suffer cruelly, but because they had taken the bread away."

"How long have you been in this place?"

"Nigh two years—a more lenient sentence than I expected. I have only five more weeks to go through. Oh, it has been worse than hell!"

"Poor fellow!"

"You must not pity me," he said simply; "I do not deserve it. You are here on a charge of murder, are you not?"

"Yes. What do you think of me?"

"I am very sorry for you. Nowadays the guilty often fare better than the innocent."

"Then you believe me innocent!"

"Certainly I do."

The words were quietly uttered, and were called forth by nothing more reliable than a few disjointed assertions I had made the preceding night, when we lay together. But it is wonderful how they cheered me. I wrung his hand, too deeply moved to speak, and could hardly have felt more triumphant had I been acquitted in full court.

The young parson and I sat together the whole morning and talked of Sussex, of fields, woods, streams, stars, and rain. He also gave me some information about jail life and my fellow-prisoners.

There were nearly fifty men in the ward. Most of them were thieves, pick-pockets, "shorters," and "smashers," the offscouring of the county. Their language was always foul, and they were always fuddled with drink. There was almost as large a percentage of brawlers, scraggers, and stabbers. These brought their crimes with them to jail, and

when in liquor made the ward a very Bedlam with their violence. There was a third class, not nearly so numerous, consisting of men who had once been honest and respectable, but who, owing to poverty, drink, or some sudden temptation, had committed a felony.

The wardsmen, or chief prisoner, was the fellow who had so minutely catechised me the day of my arrival. No words of my comrade's could describe this wretch's villainy; it was to be brought home to me during the terrible days which followed. Joe Timberlake had been in jail for some years, and it seemed as if his object were to sear away what faint marks of innocency yet remained on the hearts of his comrades. He exercised a horrible tyranny over the ward. The scoundrel had in his possession one of the jailer's whips, and with this I have seen him thrash a fellow till his clothes were in ribbons.

He could practically do what he chose. The jailer never interfered—in fact, he abetted him. Sometimes in the cold evenings Joe would light a fire for the cooking of tripe, herrings, and sausages, and last, but not least, for the heating of a poker, with which, when liquor moved him, he inflicted gruesome tortures on the more helpless of his comrades. If an ordinary prisoner had ventured to do this the jailer would have had him flogged almost to death, but because the tyrant was Timberlake, he never showed himself in the ward, in spite of the shrieks which proceeded from it on such occasions.

Once Joe, more drunk than usual, burnt out a

victim's eye. The poor wretch made such an outcry that the governor heard it, and sent the jailer up to investigate. He looked in and saw the fellow rolling over and over on the ground, his hands covering his face ; he shook his head at Timberlake, said that he would report him if he did it again, and went away.

Every other day we were turned out into the prison yard, that we might breathe a combination of smoke and smell called "fresh air," and indulge in a few occasional strides called "exercise." In the yard prisoners were allowed to interview their friends, who stood on the further side of an iron grating. Most of my fellow captives had friends, chiefly of the softer sex, but my heart never beat with the hope of seeing a loved face, and I skulked by myself on the opposite side of the yard, watching enviously the interchange of greetings.

One day as I lounged thus, and had taken my Bible from my pocket for comfort, the young Sussex clergyman came up to me.

"There are some people wishing to see you."

"To see me !" My cheeks flushed and my eyes glowed, but I assured him that he must be mistaken.

"Indeed, I'm not. They were asking for you by name—for Mr. Humphrey Lyte."

"Who are they ? Do you know ?"

"A man and a girl."

I dashed off across the yard. I expected to see Ruth Shotover. But it was not the beloved face that smiled on me, though the smile was just as

sweet. Behind the grating stood Mary Winde and her father. I held out both my hands, while my heart was too full for speech.

"God bless you, lad," said Peter huskily.

"God bless you, sir. This is too great a kindness."

"It was the promptings of our hearts. Directly we had Ruth Shotover's letter telling us of your trouble, Mary and I packed up our traps and came to Maidstone."

"How is it that you are so good to me? So you heard the news from Ruth Shotover. Do—do you know where she is now?"

"She is in Maidstone."

My heart leaped and thumped, and my cheeks flushed scarlet with joy.

"How long had she been here?"

"She arrived yesterday with her brother and the Wychellows."

Then Mary leaned forward, and put her hand in mine.

"Humphrey, have you heard that Ruth is no longer engaged to Mr. Enchmarsh?"

"I—I—no one told me."

"Well, it is true, and I'm not surprised—in fact, it is a mystery to me how they ever came to be engaged at all. What should you say, Humphrey, if one day she paid you a visit?"

"Oh, Mary, tell me, did she ever hint that she might?"

"Hint! why, she has been on her knees to Sir Miles Wychellow, begging him to take her; she

would have come here to-day if the doctor had allowed it."

"Has she been ill, then?"

"Yes, Humphrey, so ill that she could not leave Ithornden till yesterday, and even then she would not have left if Sir Miles had had his way. He wanted her to remain quietly in the country, but she said: "I shall go to Maidstone, and I shall stay there till Humphrey Lyte is acquitted!"

"Then she believes me innocent!" My voice shook with rapture.

"Yes, and so do I," said Mary.

"And so do I," said Peter.

"You are very kind."

"And credulous, some people would say. And let me tell you, lad, that it's only because I know you to be incapable of such a revolting crime that I believe in your innocence. The evidence is dead against you. Sir Miles swears to your guilt, though he thinks it's very likely only a case of manslaughter. By the bye, my lad, as you're a felon in the eye of the law, you won't be allowed the benefit of counsel. Have you considered what defence you shall make?"

I shook my head.

"That's a piece of sinful neglect. Your life is too precious to be thrown away. Hearken, lad—Mary and I had a long talk about you last night, and what do you think was the result of it?"

"Indeed, I cannot say."

"Why, we both vowed that you're keeping something back."

I set my teeth hard, then replied :

"Why should you think that?"

"Because you've behaved so strangely. You deny the murder, but you won't give us a plain tale of what happened, and when questioned you say silly things which you afterwards confess to be untrue. You were with John Palehouse the whole morning of the crime, and you must know who committed it even if you weren't an actual witness."

I was silent, and Peter continued :

"You're acting foolishly and wickedly. Your friends can't help you unless you give them facts."

"I leave that to Curate Kitson."

"Then you're a fool!" exclaimed Peter.

"There is little doubt of that," I cried bitterly ;
"but, come, let us speak of happier things. Tell me about Shoyswell and all the dear places round it. Mary, are there many moon-daisies at Witherhurst, and many wild fowl on the marshes of Lossenham? Do you remember how we used to gather cowslips at Socknersh? Are they all faded now?"

She answered none of these questions, but once more took my grimy hand in hers, and said :

"Humphrey, Ruth is free, and you too must be free—for her sake."

"The jury, not I, will decide that."

She was about to reply, but was cut short by the voice of the jailer ordering us away. So I wrung Peter's hand, and kissed Mary's, and left them, thanking God for two such friends.

I spent the next day in a state of feverish excite-

ment, and when, the morning after, the hour of our "fresh air and exercise" drew near, I could scarcely contain myself. My bright eyes and flushed cheeks made my fellow-prisoners wonder and jeer.

Would Ruth come? Should I see her? I perplexed my heart with useless questions. I could scarcely eat for excitement. Oh, my darling, my darling! When I see you I shall forget all this misery and iron. I shall forget that I am in prison, and think I am in Paradise.

The ward door flew open with a clang, and out we filed. Down the passage we tramped, a regiment of rags and sorrow. A gust of wind blew in upon us as the yard gate was flung back, and we poured into the open space, stumbling and blinking in the unaccustomed light. I pushed my way through the crowd to the grating. I saw a little blue gown.

She stood in a throng of street-walking girls with bold eyes and loud laughter. Vagabonds, loafers, cadgers rubbed their tatters against her dress—the little blue dress in which I had first seen her. She gripped the bars and leaned against them, while her eyes roamed from face to face. The next moment she caught sight of me, and her lips parted with a cry:

"Humphrey!"

"Ruth!"

It was all we said. I staggered against the bars, and covered her hands with mine. I did not kiss her—the grating was too close, and round us stood a crowd of leering, ogling, jibing scoundrels and courtezans.

"Dear," I said, after a long silence, "let us pretend that this is the garden-gate."

"The garden-gate——"

"Yes ; I want to forget the prison, and you are to forget it too. We are to talk of happy things, brightly, merrily, as if only the garden-gate divided us."

"I'll try, Humphrey, but I don't feel merry."

"Nor do I, Ruthie. Still, let's pretend."

"Have you heard ?—about my freedom ?"

"Yes ; Mary told me."

"I can't understand it, I——"

She was interrupted by an exclamation from a figure standing at her side, who might have been made of wood for all the attention I had hitherto paid him, but whom I now saw to be Sir Miles Wychellow.

"Egad, young people ! What the devil does all this mean ?"

We both flushed crimson, and I realised that my thoughtlessness had placed us in an awkward and shameful position. Sir Miles knew that we had not met since the breaking off of Ruth's engagement, and would naturally infer that we had been carrying on a clandestine love affair while she was still betrothed to Enchmarsh. I made haste to put matters straight.

"You are certainly entitled to an explanation, Sir Miles. I—I have loved Miss Shotover for many months."

"While she was betrothed to another man."

"True, and I confess that I allowed my passion

to overmaster me, and spoke words I had no right to utter. But this dear lady put me to shame with her steadfastness and purity, and even if John Palehouse had not been killed and I been arrested, I shouldn't have stayed another hour at Ithornden."

Sir Miles answered nothing, and I realised with a pang that his silence was due to a natural reluctance to tell a poor fellow who would soon be hanged that he was an insolent dog to have aspired to the affections of a lady like Ruth. True, I was of as good blood as she, but I was a tramp, a beggar, a felon, and it was as well that a noose should end my unlucky passion. Ruth must have guessed what was passing in my mind, for her eyes flashed, and she held my hand close in hers.

I broke the embarrassing silence.

"Where is Enchmarsh?"

"At Kitchenhour. Poor fellow! He's in a bad way. He was to have started for the continent last Tuesday—to see some friends in Holland, I believe—but on his way from Ithornden to Sussex his horse fell on him and broke his leg, so he's now lying at his Manor in a devilish sorry state."

"And how is your brother, Ruthie?"

"He's much better, dear"—then she leaned forward and whispered: "He has been much better ever since my engagement was broken off."

"The Windes told me he was in Maidstone."

"Yes." Then I saw, rather than heard, her murmur: "Poor Guy!" There was on her face that look of motherly tenderness she always wore,

when speaking of her brother—and my heart burned with strengthened resolution.

"You look very poorly, dear boy," she added softly, stroking my dirty hand.

"I don't feel so," I replied, lying.

"You look a regular ragamuffin!" said Sir Miles bluntly. "Have you no opportunities for washing in jail?"

"Not unless I use my drinking water, which is too precious."

"Do you get enough to eat?"

I did not answer, for I could see the jailer unlocking the yard gates. Our moments of bliss were numbered.

"Oh, Humphrey!" cried Ruth, "it's hard to leave you in this dreadful place."

"Don't fret about me, child. You remember Lovelace's words: 'If I have freedom in my love, and in my soul am free——'"

"Angels that soar in light above have not such liberty," she finished gravely.

"Come in with you, and no loitering!" shouted the jailer.

CHAPTER XVIII

OF THE METHODIST AND MUCH STORM AND TROUBLE

WHAT astonished and touched me most during the days which followed was the kindness of my friends ; not only of those who, in spite of appearances, believed me innocent, but of those who thought the worst of me. Sir Miles Wychellow lent me money—I was forced to subdue my pride and borrow, for I was starving—Lady Wychellow knitted me a jersey to wear during the terrible nights when I could not sleep for the cold, and Mary Winde brought me sweet oranges to slake my thirst during the terrible days when I could not rest for the heat. I no longer skulked alone while my fellow-prisoners greeted their friends ; there was always a loved face at the grating.

I did not see Ruth as often as I wished, and I realised that it was only because I should almost certainly be hanged I was allowed to see her at all. Sir Miles would have done his best to part us, had he not believed that the hangman would soon perform that office for him.

Once Guy Shotover came to see me. I could not

tell by his manner whether he thought me innocent or guilty, and with a tact wanting in many of my visitors, he forebore any direct reference to my plight. Ruth had told me that he had looked better since her engagement was broken off, but in my opinion he looked infinitely worse. His cheeks were redder and his eyes brighter, it is true, but it was the bloom and brilliancy of a decline. As I gazed at him, a voice within me cried : "What is the avail of laying down your life ? This man will not live another year." But I silenced the coward in my heart. I did not know for a certainty that Shotover was dying ; he might have years and years of life before him for aught I could tell. Besides, let disease slay him, not my tongue !

Poor fellow ! I had forgiven him long ago, and my heart was warm with love's brother, compassion, as I looked into his miserable eyes and read their secret—the secret of a sin clamouring to be confessed for its own sake. Soon afterwards he went back to Ewehurst. He hated the town, and felt well enough to resume his clerical duties.

A few days later Peter Winde received a subpoena bidding him give evidence for the prosecution, who had heard that it was he who had given me my pistol, and wished him to identify it in court. There were—and could be—no witnesses for the defence, and though I occasionally considered what I might safely say on my own behalf, I knew that I should be practically in the position of an unarmed man attacked on all sides—and it was cruel to have Peter's hand

among those uplifted to strike me down. Mary would not be in Maidstone for my trial. Her servant girl had fallen sick, and she was obliged to go back to Shoyswell. The day before she left she came to bid me good-bye.

"I shall be back as soon as possible, and I pray that when I next see you it will not be through iron bars."

"I pray the same, dear Mary."

"By the by, my lad," said Peter, "I've a piece of news for you—your family are in Maidstone!"

"My family!"

"Yes—your father and mother and Mr. Clonmel Lyte. They must have read of your arrest in the papers. Do you want to send them any message?"

"There would be no use in that."

"Don't you think that their coming to Maidstone is a sign that they've relented towards you?"

I shook my head. My arrest and trial would furnish my father with a good excuse for taking a holiday. "If they wished to have anything to do with me, they would have come to see me, or have sent me word. Where are they staying?"

"At the George. Mayn't I take them a message? They've served you badly, but they're your flesh and blood."

"Perhaps you are right, Mr. Winde. Pray give my father and mother my humble duty."

Peter promised, but no response was made.

My trial was to take place in a week, and many and varied were the speculations in the jail as to

what the result of it would be. The general opinion was that I should be "scragged," and as it was delightful to see a young fellow turn pale and gnaw his lips, in spite of all his efforts to play the game-cock, my comrades regaled me with sickening stories of the gallows, which, owing either to the clumsiness of the machinery or to the hangman's want of skill, was often the scene of frightful agonies.

Sir Miles Wychellow paid me occasional visits, apparently for no other purpose than to wring facts from my unwilling lips. In this he believed he was acting for my good. "If you would only explain matters, instead of scowling and shaking your head," he cried one day when I had been more sullen than usual, "begad! the jury might bring in a verdict of manslaughter."

"Where would be my advantage? The penalty for manslaughter is the same as for murder."

"If you were found guilty of manslaughter, your friends could easily get you a reprieve; but if you're sentenced for murder—gad! it's all up with you! Several murders have been committed round here of late, and the courts are putting down the evil with a strong hand. So, young man, if once you're found guilty of murder, you're hanged!"

I brooded over these words for the rest of the day, and parted with my last hope.

That night I dreamed a horrible dream. I dreamed that I was dead, and that Enchmarsh had renewed his persecution of Ruth. I woke trembling, and gripping my companion's arm. I could not,

dared not, sleep again. I sat up and thought, my chin resting on my hand.

It is strange, but till that night I had never considered the possibility of Enchmarsh returning to his blackguardism after my death. I now realised that it was not only a possibility—it was a practical certainty. What could I do? Enchmarsh held his tongue only for fear of mine, and when that tongue was silenced for ever—I shuddered. True, there was his confession safe in my pocket; but if that were found and read at my death, I had died in vain. The secret of Enchmarsh's crime must be kept; I must destroy the fatal paper on the morning of my execution. Then my enemy would no longer have anything to fear, and would once more make Ruth's life a burden and a curse. Whichever way I acted I seemed bound to thwart my own ends, to make my sacrifice of none effect.

I groaned aloud in my perplexity, so that half the ward woke up and swore at me. What was I to do? How was I to tie Enchmarsh's tongue after my own was dust? I prayed for guidance, and the thought came to me, "Confide your secret to a friend; pass it on to one you can trust, who, strengthened with it, will mount guard over Enchmarsh after you have laid down your arms."

But whom should I tell? Peter Winde? Sir Miles Wychellow? I should have no opportunity for telling them. Our meetings were in a crowd, and my secret would run the risk of being heard by half the prison. Besides, even if it were not so, I doubted if

either of these men would consider themselves justified in keeping silence after my confession. They would probably insist on the arrest of the real culprit, would drag me from jail, and publish abroad my sacrifice—making it useless.

Whom, then, could I confide in ? The dawn came shuddering into the room, and showed me the faces of my companions—stern, degraded, peaceless. Then the lad at my side stirred and moaned, for the cruel light fell on his eyes, and roused him out of the sleep into which he had only just fallen after a long night of tossing.

What of him ? He seemed attached to me ; I had reason to think him faithful ; he knew Enchmarsh, and hated him. Nevertheless, I shrank from telling him. But some one must be told, and whom could I tell if not this fellow ? Peter Winde and Sir Miles were out of the question ; so were all my friends except this poor criminal. Would my secret be safe with him ? I thought so. He was in prison for theft, but his crime had been committed under the pressure of starvation ; it was not the result of systematic dishonesty and untrustworthiness. Yet he was a drunkard, and though he fought with all the feeble strength of a weak will and a weak constitution against his curse, I had seen him drunk several times during the fortnight I had been in prison. Could I confide the most precious secret of my life to a drunkard, who might any day blab it forth in his cups ? Yes, I could rely on him, for he was not as the common toper, who talks and grins and laughs, and

opens his heart. Liquor made him sullen and fierce, drove him into some lonely corner, where he would lie with hidden face till at last he fell asleep, to wake ashamed and in his right mind. But would he be in a position to keep watch over Enchmarsh? There was no doubt of that. He had once told me that after his release he was to go to his brother, who lived at Woodchurch in South Kent, and had offered him a fresh start in life at his farm. Woodchurch was only a matter of fourteen miles from Kitchenhour.

I thought, and prayed over my thoughts, till heat and sunshine would no longer suffer my companions to sleep, and they struggled up, groaning, and cursing the light that woke them to fresh misery.

I awaited an opportunity for speaking alone with my friend. It was not long in coming. While the rest of the ward were trying to drown their newly-awakened cares in washy ale, he came to me where I sat in the furthest corner of the room, and offered me a share of some meat he had managed to buy. I declined it, but begged him to stay with me instead of going back to the swilling crowd, some of whom were already drunken.

"Only three weeks more," he said, "then I—but it's cruel of me to rejoice in this way when in three weeks you——"

"Will very likely be hanged. That's exactly what I want to speak to you about. Come close; I do not wish the rest of the ward to hear."

He drew closer, and I whispered :

"I have something to tell you, but first of all you must swear secrecy."

"I swear it," he said simply.

"Thank you. Perhaps you remember that when I first came here you told me you thought me innocent?"

"I did—and I do still."

"Well, I'm going to tell you who the real murderer was."

He started back from me.

"You—you don't mean to say you know?"

"I know."

"Then why in God's name are you here?"

"For reasons I shall soon tell you. Listen. I did not commit the murder, but I witnessed it. The real murderer is a man you know as well as I do."

"Who? Tell me——"

"Harold Enchmarsh."

The fellow's jaw dropped. He seized my arm, and stared at me.

"Yes. Enchmarsh was my friend's cousin, and had cruelly wronged him. High words passed between them, and Enchmarsh in a fit of fury dashed out his kinsman's brains."

"Then are you keeping silence to shield Enchmarsh?"

I laughed aloud.

"The devil, no! I would have dragged him before a magistrate that very hour, had he not threatened a deadly injury to some one I loved."

"What injury?"

"I cannot tell you. I am sworn to keep silence. Let it suffice that it would have ruined a life dearer to me than my own. I promised Enchmarsh his liberty if he would swear to refrain his malice, and to break off an engagement he had contracted with a girl who hated him, but who was going to marry him for reasons I again cannot give you."

"And he swore?"

"Yes, he swore, and I went off happy, in spite of my dear friend's death, for I knew that some one I loved even more passionately would be saved from much sorrow. An hour later I was a prisoner, accused of the crime Enchmarsh had committed."

"Could you not clear yourself?"

"Not without betraying Enchmarsh, which would have meant the anguish of this poor girl I loved. I tried to think of some other way; I soon found out there was no other way."

"So you suffered in silence?"

"I have been silent up till now, and have suffered, if you can call that suffering which is endured for love's sake. But last night the thought came to me—or rather I chose to believe that God showed me in a dream—'When I am dead, Enchmarsh will no longer fear betrayal, and he will renew his persecution of this girl I love.' He will either force her once more into an engagement with him, or he will bring on her the sorrow to which I have already referred. Now, it is in this I want you to help me."

"I will do anything in my power."

"It is in your power, I am sure. I merely want

you, when I am dead and you are free, to keep watch over Enchmarsh, and if he in any way molests this girl, or her brother, to drag him before a magistrate on a charge of murder."

"My dear fellow, I would willingly oblige you, but I fear that it would be useless for me to bring an accusation of murder against a man, having no proofs, no evidence——"

"But I have both. I have the fellow's full confession in my pocket."

"You have!"

"Yes. I made him write it out five minutes after the crime. So I have a hold on him, and when I am dead I do not wish that hold to be relinquished. I shall give you the paper, and trust that, if need be, you will use it."

"I shall, I swear! But who is this girl, and where does she live, that I may know if he molests her?"

"Her name is Ruth Shotover, and she and her brother live at Ewehurst in Sussex."

"Not far from where I shall be."

"No. But I expect they will leave it soon. It is too near Kitchenhour for their happiness. You must find out where they go, and take care that Enchmarsh does not visit them. If he should renew his engagement with the girl, or molest her or her brother in any way—well, you know what to do."

"And I'll do it."

"I think you have seen Miss Shotover. She has been here to visit me once or twice. She has red hair, and——"

"Ah, I remember her. She came with the magistrate fellow who is always persecuting you for 'facts.' She has a lovely face. I dreamed of her for two nights afterwards. Her brother once came to see you, too, didn't he?"

"Yes; and I'm glad you have seen both the Shot-overs, as you will be better able to watch over them. Now I shall show you the confession. But I shall not give it to you till—till we part."

He pressed my hand silently, and I drew the paper out of my pocket.

"Here, read it. You see what power I have."

He read it, knitting his brows.

"How dearly you must love your Ruth to keep silence with this in your possession. If I had loved a girl so dearly I might have been a better man."

"You will leave the old life behind you in this ail," I said, deeply touched; "you will go forward to nobler things."

"I trust so—I pray so. Dick has promised to give me a fresh start. He was always a faithful brother to me. By-the-by, we must let Enchmarsh know you have told me this. I had better go to him directly I am released."

"Yes—but, quick! Give me the paper! The fellows are staring at us."

They did more than stare; they rushed in a body towards us before I had well thrust back the confession into my pocket.

"Hello, Ranter! What've you got there?" cried Timberlake.

"Nothing," I answered, trying to look unconcerned.

"That's a damn lie! I saw you hide a paper somewhere about you. Let's have a look at it."

"I tell you I've nothing!" I cried desperately.

"We'll soon see that. I bet you a hundred to one he's hiding a love-letter. We've left you alone too long, my fine feller. We're going to hear something about that mort o' yours, and see her letters."

"I haven't got a letter."

"Let's see—hold him, lads."

Two fellows seized my arms. The young clergyman interposed. "Here, hands off! Fair play! What if he has got a letter, you've no right to see it."

"Might is right!" shouted Timberlake. "Hold fast, lads!"

He would have thrust his hand into my pocket, while I raged and ground my teeth like an impotent beast; but my friend rushed at him and tore him away. There was a frantic scuffle, and the next minute the poor lad was lying unconscious, his arm broken.

Timberlake sneered.

"Now for our perfect lover," and his hand was in my pocket.

A mist swam before me, and through it I dimly saw the villain draw out the paper and unfold it. I gathered myself together, and the next moment the fellows who held me were rolling on the floor, and I was at Timberlake's throat.

He staggered, but recovered himself, and we swayed together. I tried to snatch the paper out of his hand, but he was taller than I, and held it aloft, just out of my reach. We struggled frantically, desperation giving me a strength I had never hitherto possessed. I managed to grip his great bare arm, and would have dragged it down, but at that moment we reeled against the window. Timberlake flung himself free.

"If I can't have it, you shan't," and the next moment the precious fragment that I held dearer than my life was whirling in the summer wind, fluttering, dancing, and sinking slowly into the yard.

Then I verily believe that I lost my reason. With a cry of fury and despair I flung myself on Timberlake, and struggled like a beast to kill him. I wanted his life. I was mad.

The rest of the ward, who, though the supporters of the wardsmen against his victims, did not love him too dearly to enjoy seeing him paid in his own coin, offered no interference, but stood watching us as we tottered up and down the room. I clutched at his throat, but he tore my fingers away, breaking one of them. I tried to break his back, but he dragged my head down against his shoulder, and pulled out handfuls of my hair. Our clothes were soon in tatters, and our breasts and shoulders uncovered. He was getting the worst of it. I should soon kill him. He shouted, cursed, and screamed. I was silent; I only panted.

I tried to drag him against the wall and dash out

his brains, but he bit and tore my encircling arms, and we staggered across the room, mauling one another like two furious dogs. Near the middle of the ward lay my poor friend ; we stumbled over his body, and down we crashed. Who would rise first ?

For an instant we both lay stunned. Then I sprang to my feet, and the next moment would have murdered him, had not the door burst open and the jailer appeared. I stood petrified, then suddenly came to my senses. Timberlake rolled on the floor in agony. His thigh was broken.

"How now, you beasts !" shrieked the jailer. "What hellish pranks are you up to ?"

My fellow-prisoners evidently thought it more to their advantage to take Timberlake's part than mine. "The Methodist's been mauling Joe !" they shouted with one accord.

"Oh, it's you, is it, you fighting devil ?" and he gave me a blow in the face that nearly broke my jaw. "I'll teach you to go murdering your wardsman"—another blow, and I measured my length on the ground.

"Here, you fellers, keep him down while I run for help. You young beast ! I'll have the skin flayed off your shoulders for this. Keep him down, I say—sit on him, stifle him, throttle him—anything you please, only keep him down."

My companions obeyed, nothing loth, and I was half dead by the time the jailer returned with two sub-warders and a surgeon for Timberlake, who had not ceased to roll and scream.

All my fury was gone, and when I was at last pulled to my feet, I stood shamed and mute, while fetters were fastened on my wrists and ankles. Then I was half-dragged, half-carried to the governor's office.

The governor listened to the jailer's indictment, and asked me if I had anything to say for myself.

As I could only shake my head, he ordered me a flogging and three days' imprisonment in a dark cell. No doubt I deserved both.

"Thank God that Ruth cannot see me now!" I thought, as they hurried me down the passage. "Would she recognise this dishevelled, blood-stained, half-naked wretch as her lover?" The thought of Ruth was poignant as death, for once more in front of her stretched the old misery, and I was powerless to save her from it. That scrap of paper which had meant her peace and mine was gone—lost for ever, whirled by the summer wind out of sight or ken. My anguish of mind was too much for my pain-enfeebled body, and I groaned.

The men thought it was horror at my punishment which caused my misery, and one of them, who was a humane fellow, tried to cheer me by saying that the lashing would be soon over, and perhaps not so terrible as I imagined; and as for the dark cell, prisoners that had the cat were only too glad of a little peace and quiet afterwards.

"It's as well 'is mother can't see 'im."

The words seemed to come to me from a great

way off, as I was carried back along the passage. I was conscious of little—only that I was being carried, that one man bore my head and another my legs, and that one of my arms was hanging so that my hand dragged along the floor.

We came to a door, and a jailer opened it. Surely that was a black curtain which I saw stretched across the entrance. No, for they pushed me into it. The door shut with a hideous rattle of iron, and the blackness wrapped me round. I tried to push it away, for it pressed upon my eyeballs. Then I sank to the ground, covering my face.

Consciousness slipped away, and I entered a hell of dreams. I was at Brede Parsonage, working in the oast-barn. Clonmel had just been flogging me, and I was thinking how I could kill him. I saw him standing at the corner of the great pasture-field, and stole after him, leaving blood-marks on the grass where my feet had pressed. But when he turned round to grapple me, I saw the face of Harold Enchmarsh, and he shivered like a ghost from my sight.

Then I was in a high, cloudy place, where a great wind was shrieking, and in front of my eyes, dancing, fluttering, whirling in the wind, was a tiny scrap of paper. I struggled to catch it, but it eluded my grasp, and suddenly I fell from the windy place, and consciousness came back with a gasp of agony.

I knew where I was ; I remembered what had happened, and in vain I prayed God to kill both knowledge and remembrance. I had been tied up and lashed like a dog because I had behaved like a

dog. My shirt was saturated with something that was warm as well as wet. I shuddered. Then suddenly I threw up my arms with a cry of anguish, for I remembered that I was suffering in vain. When I was dead Ruth would be in even a worse plight than if at the beginning I had refused to sacrifice myself, and had sent her brother to the gibbet. I had no hope of living; I could not clear myself without the paper, which had no doubt by this time been trodden an inch deep into the mud. I must die, and Ruth must live on in misery deeper than that from which I had struggled in prayers and anguish to save her.

Oh, that I had allowed Timberlake to read the fatal confession! then at least I should have been free and able to help her—at least, I should not have been in this foul hole, suffocating as a coffin, damp as the grave, and black as hell. How long had I been there? I considered. It seemed an eternity, but I thought that very likely my imprisonment had not lasted more than twelve hours. How should I endure three days of it? I had heard of men leaving the dark cell as shrieking lunatics. The horror of madness made me tremble. I must do something to distract my thoughts—to make me forget the darkness, the airlessness, the damp, the smell, the living things that crawled over my limbs, the pains of my torn body. I tried to repeat a psalm, but my mind was incapable of any sustained effort, and agonising thoughts broke in upon the grand old words of comfort: "The

Lord is my shepherd. . . . The Lord is my shepherd. . . ." I murmured wildly, staring with strained eyeballs into the dark—"therefore can I lack nothing . . . lack nothing. . . ." I gave up the attempt, for the rest of the psalm had fled from my mind, leaving it a wilderness of terror. I was filled with a vague, horrible fear, which I had often felt at Brede Parsonage, which had often driven me to leave my bed and entreat one of my brothers to take me into his, that the contact of a warm human body might soothe away the nameless horror that gripped me. I was now alone, ill, broken in mind and body. I cowered down in a corner of my prison, my hands clasped against my breast, my eyes staring wildly into the dark. Oh, that dreadful dark ! It seemed to enwrap my very soul ; it seemed a loathsome material thing ; it seemed to crush me. I felt blood trickling down my chin. What had happened ? Ah ! I remembered. I had bitten my lips to keep down my cries while I was being flogged, and they still bled. I longed to lose consciousness once more, for no phantasmagoria could be worse than the awful reality, and at last I fell into a kind of waking dream. I thought that I was walking with John Palehouse along the Biddenden road. The wind was moaning, the clouds were low. Then suddenly I lifted my eyes to his face, and saw on his temple a little grey bruise. I shrieked and awoke. " John, John !" I cried, till the blackness echoed. " I want you—I want you—come to me—how shall I bear this torture without

you?—Come to me——” Then God sent a merciful blank.

I was roused by a sudden stream of light. I thought it was flames, and covered my face.

“’Ere, take this.” The warder kicked me, and thrust a bowl of nauseous-looking gruel into my hands.

I tried to speak to him, but my parched lips refused to utter, and it was not till he had all but shut the door that I managed to gasp :

“How long have I been in this place?”

“Maybe three hours,” he said, and banged the door.

I fell back with a moan. Three hours! I had thought it twelve, hoped it might be eighteen. I sobbed aloud in anguish. I could not eat my supper. The smell of it alone made me feel sick. I was terribly thirsty. Oh, that they would give me a drink of water! I beat on the door and cried to the jailer, but no one heard.

I resolved to try to sleep, but my shoulders were so lacerated that I could not lie on my back or side, so I stretched myself on my face and prayed God to let me sleep or—better still—die.

I did neither.

At last morning came, and when the jailer brought me a fresh relay of gruel, I caught the skirt of his coat—for I could not lift myself from the ground—and prayed him to bring me some water for Christ’s sake. He muttered something about “being against orders,” but the light falling on my face showed him my black, cracked lips, and he

had compassion on me. He fetched me a jug of fairly clean water, and left it with me in my cell.

The rest of the day I spent chiefly in dozing, dreaming, or raving. I slept all that night, but an attempt to eat my gruel resulted in a dreadful attack of sickness, which left me so weak that I could hardly move or breathe.

Nevertheless, my mind was more calm and unclouded, and I began to rack my brains for some way of maintaining my hold on Enchmarsh, even though his confession was lost. It did not take me long to realise that this would be impossible. The confession was the only weapon which I could rely on, and without it I was powerless. There seemed no way out of my misery. Ruth's heart and mine must be broken on the same wheel. I ground my teeth and moaned. True, Enchmarsh had no idea that I had lost the paper; he would make no attempt to molest the poor child during my lifetime, but after my death—— Oh, it was too horrible to contemplate. I had suffered in vain, sacrificed my good name, offered up my life—in vain. Oh, that I could only live! Let Guy Shotover perish a thousand times rather than that my poor dear should be persecuted, tortured, and shamed by the man from whom I had thought to have saved her for ever. Should I tell my story to the governor, and denounce Enchmarsh, trusting that I should be able without the paper to prove my assertions? Vain thought! I could never do that. Such an action would merely blacken me as

a coward, who tried to save himself at the last moment by shifting the burden of his guilt on to another man. If I was to die, at least I should die courageously. Men should say: "He was a black-guard, but he died well."

At last the third day came, and the blessed light streamed in upon me, no more to be shut away till my eyes filmed and closed for ever. I could scarcely stagger up from the floor, and I could not see the jailer's face, so dazzling was the unaccustomed brightness. He dragged me back to the ward, unlocked the door, and pushed me in. I still wore my chains, for I was considered a dangerous prisoner, and no longer allowed to go unfettered.

I expected my former comrades to insult, perhaps to illtreat, me, but they took no notice beyond to nudge one another and leer, as with a jingle of chains I sank down against the wall, too weak to do more than breathe.

I was still unaccustomed to the light—in fact, it was a few days ere I could see as before—and lay with my eyes shut. I did not hear a soft footfall approach me, and started when a hand touched my shoulder.

I looked up, and saw my friend, the young clergyman, his arm in a sling. He sat down beside me, and without a word slipped something into my hand. My fingers closed round it mechanically, and I wondered half-stupidly what it could be.

"It's your paper," said my friend gently, seeing how dazed I was.

"Enchmarsh's confession!" I cried incredulously.

"Yes. I found it in the yard when we were turned out there the other day. It had drifted on to a pile of rubbish."

My joy was so great and my body so weak that I nearly swooned. For a few moments I could not speak, but could only lie clasping the precious paper to my heart.

"You'd better stow it away," said my friend; and as I was too weak and dazed to do anything for myself, he unclasped my hot hand, took the paper, and thrust it into my pocket.

"I am loth to trouble you when you are so ill," he continued, "but I think it only right that you should know that the paper is practically illegible."

"What has happened?" I asked faintly, only half understanding him.

"It has been rained upon, and has been sadly torn. It is decipherable now, but a month hence it will be of no use to us whatever."

"What can I do?"

"Ask Enchmarsh to send you another, written fairly in ink. He will not dare refuse you."

"But how can I communicate with him? I thought——"

"It is generally impossible to send secret letters from jail, I confess. But we are unusually fortunate. One of the fellows here is to be released to-morrow, and will smuggle to Kitchenhour whatever you choose to write."

"Can he be trusted?"

"Implicitly. I've employed him before this, and he has never failed me."

"But I have no paper."

"Josh Parkins has some, and will sell you a sheet for half a crown."

"I've no money."

"Yes, you have. I saw the magistrate fellow in the yard yesterday. I told him what trouble you were in, and he gave me a quid for you when you should come out. It was very good of him to trust me."

"Did—did you see Ruth?"

"The girl you love, for whose sake you have suffered so terribly?"

"Yes—I love her—did you see her?"

He nodded, and pressed my hand.

"Did you tell her?"

"Yes."

"That I tried to kill Timberlake?"

"I never knew you tried to kill Timberlake."

"I did. I wanted to break his back. Where is he? Is he here?"

"No. He's been removed to the infirmary."

"Thank God! Then—then didn't Ruth know I tried to kill Timberlake?"

"No; I told her only what I knew myself, and, of course, not all of that."

"She ought to know—she ought to know the worst of me."

"Don't bother your poor head about that. You'll see her yourself soon."

"Did she cry? Was she unhappy when you told her I'd been flogged?"

"I did not mention the flogging."

"Thank you."

"I told her you had been put in solitary confinement for three days. I thought it best to say nothing about the dark cell. But, come now, poor lad, try and rest a bit. Lean against me."

"Did Ruth send me a message?"

"She sent you her love."

"Did she wear a blue gown?" I continued, hardly knowing what I said.

"Yes—and she was so lovely! But you mustn't speak any more; your poor brain's all confused."

He lifted me, and let my flayed shoulders rest against him instead of the wall. I closed my eyes.

"What about Enchmarsh's letter?" I asked suddenly.

"We needn't trouble about that till the evening. Go to sleep now."

God bless the good fellow! For the rest of that day he held me up against him, soothed me when I was delirious, covered me with his own coat when I was cold, and gave me to drink when I was consumed with fever and thirst. During the afternoon I slept a little, and woke refreshed, both in mind and body. I was still very weak, but felt myself able to grapple with my letter to Enchmarsh, the writing of which must not be delayed any longer.

My friend bought a sheet of Josh Parkins's paper. Parkins had been doing a roaring trade that day, for

his fellow-prisoners, discovering that paper was to be had, were consumed with a desire to write love-letters. Seeing his goods in such demand, he became autocratic, and raised his prices. My sheet—a very dirty crumpled specimen—cost me exactly three shillings, and I believe that the last piece went for a crown.

My friend had picked up a piece of stick, which would serve as a pen, but we had no ink. So we used the only available substitute, of which, thanks to the tortures I had lately undergone, there was no lack, and when the ghastly crimson scrawl was finished my friend went in search of our confederate.

He was a tall, wiry, sly-looking man, and did not prepossess me in the least. But my friend insisted on his trustworthiness, and I asked him how much he would charge for taking a letter with all possible speed to Kitchenhour in Sussex.

He scratched his head, leered, and named an exorbitant price, quite impossible for me to pay. I told him that he must ask less, and after a great deal of wrangling he consented to serve me for half the money I possessed, the other half to be made over to him on his return with an answer to my letter. This would mean living on prison diet for a week or more, but my appetite was gone, so I did not fear the ordeal, under which many men had died.

"And 'ow shall oi get to Kitchenhour, mister? Oi've been in Ew'ust village, and can find my way to't well enough from 'ere. But where's Kitchen'am—Kitchenhour—or wotever yer calls it?"

"You leave the high-road just after you come to Mockbeggar," I cried excitedly; "there's a clump of larches on the left-hand side of the way, and a mavis sings there. You go on till you come to a stretch of down all golden with furze, and you can see the Rother in the valley, and the marshes, and the dykes, and—and——"

My voice trailed off in a sob of anguished longing, and I fell back, hiding my face.

My friend tried to comfort me. "There, there! Perhaps you'll see it all for yourself soon. But, come, tell Pearson where he's to go when he leaves the down."

"You can see Kitchenhour from the down," I said brokenly; "it's the stone house on the edge of Wet Level. You can't mistake it—and listen," I added, as he was about to take himself off, "you're to give that letter into the Squire's own hand. No doubt he'll be in bed; he's broken his leg. But never mind, insist on seeing him. And make all the haste you can, and bring the answer to the yard grating, and—and remember, it's a matter of deathly secrecy."

The fellow nodded and slouched away.

The next morning the prison gates opened to him, and he went out into the sun and wind. My heart went with him, and all day long, while my body lay agonised in the stifling heat, my heart was in the fields, among the flowers, and the sobbing notes of stock-doves.

CHAPTER XIX

OF THE METHODIST AND THE STRETCHED-OUT ARM OF THE LORD

THE day of my trial was wet and windy. I drove through the streets in a closed hackney, with the blinds down. Fortunately I had a sound constitution, and was almost recovered from my weakness and fever, though I was still far from well. I had never been in a Court of Justice before, and the strangeness of the situation, together with the stare of a thousand eyes, threw me completely out of countenance. I entered the dock pale and trembling, catching my breath, and clutching my throat as if I already felt a rope there.

My trial had evidently created much interest, for the court was thronged. Here and there among the press I saw the severe black garb and stern ascetic face of some minister of Bethel or Salem come to watch the fate of a fellow-Methodist. Women were there, attracted, no doubt, by my romantic story, of which, it appears, several new and enlarged editions were being circulated in Maidstone. I saw many parsons of the Established Church, among them

Curate Kitson and the Rector of All Saints', Hastings. Some faces were hostile, some were friendly, some mocking, some curious, all interested.

Not far off were my father, my mother, and Clonmel. It seemed impossible that barely five months had elapsed since I left Brede Parsonage, but I could see how that short time of stress and trouble had altered me by the looks of my family as they stared at my white scarred face.

I saw Peter Winde among the crowd, with Sir Miles and Lady Wychellow. But my eyes did not rest on them; they wandered anxiously, till at last they fell on Ruth. She was pale, but her lips were very red, and her eyes bright as December stars. She did not smile or wave her hand, but her eyes, with her love sitting in them, looked into mine, and our hearts met.

She was so sweet and childlike in her wide hat and muslin gown. I noticed that many girls and women cast envious glances at her as she sat, a dainty bunch of green, beside Lady Wychellow. Surely they would have laughed loud in mockery and disbelief had they been told that she loved and was loved by the felon in the dock, whose coarse blue shirt was so ragged that one saw his skin through the rents, whose hair was all matted over his eyes, and whose fierce black brows were bent in a perpetual frown.

The judge was a massively-built, unctuous-looking fellow, with large white hands, and a multitude of rings. Though slow of speech and movement, he was evidently sound of thought, for his remarks showed

penetration and a firm grasp of the case. The prosecuting counsel was a man of refined presence and graceful manner. He had a wonderfully mellow voice, and I liked the straightforward glance of his eyes.

From the first I saw that everything was hopeless. As I listened to counsel's opening speech I realised that had I been an unprejudiced spectator I should have at once set down the prisoner at the bar as guilty ; the case was so clearly made out against me. Not one damning circumstance was forgotten—the corpse, the pistol, my flight, my lies, my confession that John Palehouse and I had been alone the whole morning ; all these facts were laid calmly, concisely before the court. Counsel dwelt on my guilty looks, on my alternate refuges in lies and silence ; he pointed out how I had started, coloured, and nearly swooned at the sight of the pistol, and though continuing to deny my guilt, had been unable to account for my weapon or prove my innocence. In all this he was strictly fair ; there was no exaggeration, no misrepresentation. But the calm words were deadly, and when at length he sat down, I saw by the faces round me that my life was not considered worth a farthing's purchase.

The evidence of Curate Kitson and of Pitcher and Green was then heard, and though I had a right to cross-examine the witnesses I did not avail myself of it. Where would be the use ? I could prove nothing. After Mr. Green had finished stammering and stirring up the devil in counsel, Peter Winde was called to identify my pistol as his gift. Poor fellow, how his

voice trembled! Then the Cranbrook doctor entered the witness-box, and a long discussion followed as to the cause of the bruise on the deceased's forehead. Counsel asked if the prisoner's story of the fall into Plurenden Quarry was possible, considering the nature of the injuries, and the surgeon replied that there were on the body no traces whatever of a fall—the neck was not broken, there were no fractures elsewhere, and no bruises except that on the temple. Again I was asked if I wished to cross-examine the witness, and again I shook my head. Then, as it was nearly five o'clock, the court adjourned, and I was led from the dock. The next day Sir Miles Wychellow was to give evidence; I should make a pitiful effort at my own defence, should see the judge put on the black cap, hear the sentence read. Then—I put up my hands to my throat and shuddered.

The wind was still high, but the rain-clouds had rolled away, and the sky was blue, and bright with the golden glow of afternoon. The people thronged me as I stood waiting for the hackney which was to take me back to jail, and suddenly Clonmel came elbowing his way through the crowd, followed by my father, with my mother on his arm.

"Parson Lyte's coach for the George!" yelled my brother. Then his eyes met mine, and he grinned.

My father stood close by me, but with averted face. My mother's sleeve brushed my arm. She also was looking the other way, but every now and then I saw her neck twitch with the longing she had to turn it. Something snapped in my breast.

"Mother!" I said jerkily and hoarsely.

She turned.

"H—Humphrey—how your face is scarred!"

That was all. Her coach rolled up, and my father helped her into it. Then he and Clonmel jumped in beside her and shut the door. They rattled off over the cobbles, and I was soon on my way back to jail.

During the coal-dark August night, while men slept and shivered round me, I lay awake preparing myself for death. I knew that the time of grace allowed me after the sentence was passed would be all too short, and I should not even have the consolation of being put in a separate cell. The condemned cells were full of the overflowings of the infirmary, of men whom disease, not Mr. Justice, had sentenced. I should have to make what preparation I could among the drunkenness, the lewdness and the violence of the felon's ward.

So I prayed God to help me to forgive the men who had shamed my body and trodden down my soul, and to forgive me, who needed forgiveness more than they all. Then my mind wandered—ever since my punishment in the dark cell I had had delirium at nights—and I thought that I was lying in a great field, bathed in misty starlight, that my suffering and degradation had been a dream. But I woke from this blessed state of semiconsciousness, and realised that I lay with other wretches in a foul hole where most men would not suffer their cattle to sleep.

I thought of the prisoner who had a few days ago

gone out into the fresh air and sun and rain. I wondered where he was. He had no doubt delivered my letter, and was hastening back with the reply. Perhaps he was at this very moment walking through the dark mysterious lanes, his nostrils sweet with the smell of the country at night, of sleeping earth and dew-wet grass, his ears thrilling with mysterious night sounds—the flutter of birds suddenly awakened, the howl of a little breeze imprisoned in a cave of bramble and crack-willow, the splash of hidden water falling, the rustle of bracken under a rabbit's feet. Or perhaps he lay asleep in a sheltered field, where the mushrooms spread their tents, and where the thrushes would wake him at the fading of the stars.

Towards morning I slept, and dreamed a dream which I am sure was not born of memory. For I dreamed that I was a little child again, and that I sat on my mother's knee, while she combed my hair in the firelight. I woke as a neighbouring clock struck four, and knew, as I saw the ghastly yellow splash the pale sky outside the grating, that the day of fate had broken.

I could eat no breakfast. I felt sick and faint, and my hands shook. It was strange that I should recoil at the touch of death, I who had so often prayed for it. How I should have rejoiced as a boy at Brede Parsonage if God had said, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee!" All was changed now; life was no longer a drink of deadly wine. Besides, there is a difference between dying quietly in one's bed, when the body is so sick and tired that it would fain be

dissolved, and having one's life choked out of one by hemp and a fellow-creature's hands, when the body is sound and warm and full of vigour.

But I forced myself to appear calm. I would not meet death like a coward, when the wretched dregs of human kind faced him with a song and a snap of their fingers, joked with the hangman, and laughed in their throes. I walked quietly out of the jail between two warders, and took my seat in the hackney without blanching. The fellows well knew what was passing in my mind ; they were familiar with pitiful efforts at self-control, which too often broke down ignominiously.

"There's an infernal jamb in the streets," said one to the other.

"What's up?"

"Can't say. Looks as if it had something to do with——" and he leered at me.

The streets were certainly very crowded ; all round me rose and fell the hum of people's voices. Had they come to hear me sentenced ? To see whether I blanched or trembled, threw up my arms, or called on God ? The nearer we drew to the assize courts the louder swelled the noise, and as we entered the High Street there was a sudden burst of cheering. I stared in amazement from one to the other of my guards. The cheering redoubled, and I made a dash at the blind to pull it aside, but was promptly seized and flung back into my seat.

When we came to the court we found a dense crowd assembled, who thronged us as we alighted.

"Three cheers for the Methodee! Good luck to yer, me lad. May the judge rot if you're scragged!"

I was about to question the warders, who hustled me into the building, but before I could speak the door of an ante-room opened, and Sir Miles dashed out.

"Humphrey, was it you who arranged all this?"

"I? Arranged what?"

"Egad! This *coup de théâtre*. Haven't you heard anything about it?"

"No. One doesn't hear news in prison."

"It's all over the town. Wait a moment, warders; I must have a word with the prisoner. Miss Mary Winde has come up from Sussex with the Ewehurst constable, and Parson Taylor of Northiam, and—gad! Humphrey, you don't mean to say you know nothing of this?"

"Nothing—absolutely nothing, I swear it! For God's sake, tell me more!"

"Well, Miss Mary has brought Shotover with her."

"Shotover!"

"Yes. Little Ruthie's brother—with gyves too! The very devil's in it. And hark ye here, young man, a letter has been found, and Enchmarsh of Kitchen-hour has been arrested, and—he has killed himself. Here, jailer, quick! Some water!"

I had staggered back against him, and would have fallen had he not caught me in his arms. They made me swallow some water, and I recovered sufficiently to be able to stand and speak.

"Tell me about Enchmarsh—and Shotover—where is he?"

"In the doctor's hands, spitting blood and dying fast."

"Dying! Good God!"

"It's the best thing he can do for himself, poor wretch. He has been arrested for murder—on his own confession. Young man"—laying his hand on my arm—"is it true that you have been shielding him?"

I stared at him blankly, hardly realising what he said.

"Is it true?" he repeated almost fiercely.

"Take me into court," I cried, turning to the warders; and much to my relief they led me away.

"Sir Miles wants me to give him facts; it's always 'facts,'" I informed them, not knowing what I said.

On my appearance in the dock there was a slight burst of cheering, which was subdued by angry cries of "Silence!" I scarcely noticed it. In fact, I noticed nothing but two faces—Mary Winde's and Ruth's. Mary's cheeks were flushed with tears; Ruth sat with her head against Lady Wychellow's shoulder; her face was tear-stained, but her eyes were dry.

It was all like a dream. I listened with closed eyes and throbbing temples while counsel rose and addressed the court.

"My lord," he said, "I have to address your lordship to-day under most unusual circumstances. Since I opened the case on behalf of the Crown yesterday, I have become acquainted with certain facts which I consider myself bound to examine closely. The reason for my bringing them to your

lordship's notice at this stage of the trial is that if your lordship is satisfied, as I must say I am, that they point to the prisoner's innocence, it will be desirable to sift them thoroughly, and possibly to ask the jury to say that Lyte is not guilty."

There was a murmur in the court, but the ushers silenced it, and when quiet was once more established counsel continued rapidly :

"I will hand your lordship a letter which was found in the possession of a man who appears to have been entrusted with it by the prisoner, and I can prove by the evidence of the person who found it that it is in the prisoner's handwriting."

The judge, who had listened attentively, interrupted for the first time.

"What, then?" he said abruptly. "How can the prisoner's letter be evidence in his favour?"

"It is the prosecution which produces it, my lord," said counsel blandly, "and if your lordship will allow me to read it, it will be found to contain references to another document which your lordship will perhaps assist us to obtain in the interest of justice."

Then a filthy scrap of paper, grimy, damp, and scrawled over with blood, was passed up to the judge, who held it between his finger-tips, glanced at it, and laid it on the desk before him. There was no need for me to look at it more closely, I knew it only too well. I trembled from head to foot; a mad desperate, animal joy contended in my heart with a sorrow and a compassion which I thank God were

real enough. I was cleared ; my name was clean ; my body would soon be free. Yet, on the other hand, Shotover was arrested, and Ruth was swallowing the dregs of humiliation and grief. But not through me. There lay the whole point of the matter. It was not I who had spoken ; it was God. That I should save my life by sending Ruth's brother to the gallows was horrible, loathsome, too dreadful to think of, but that God should deliver me without any act or word of mine, with His mighty hand and His stretched-out arm, was a matter for awe, bowed head, and thankful heart.

The judge had evidently read some of my note, for he was eyeing me inquisitively and, as I thought, interrogatively. At any rate, I ventured to speak, and said in a low voice :

" I wrote that letter."

" Perhaps, my lord," said counsel quickly, " that admission will suffice for the present, if I may read a copy of the letter which I have here. I can bring forward more formal proof at a later stage."

The judge acquiesced, and counsel read :

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To Harold Enchmarsh, Esq., Kitchenhour, Sussex.

" THE confession you wrote for me in Plurenden Quarry is by this time very torn and faded. It is still legible, and I can still hang you with it, but I wish you to write me out another, fairly, in ink, for I have revealed our secret to a third party, with a view to protecting the Shotovers from your blackguardism after I

know him. His name is Gerald Frome, and he was once Vicar of Rowfant. If you refuse to do as I wish I shall immediately throw up the whole concern, so send me the confession at once by the bearer of this. I shall give it to Frome, and if you ever renew your engagement with Miss Shotover, or bring about her brother's arrest or death, he will see you hanged for the murder of John Palehouse.

"HUMPHREY LYTE."

There was nothing for me to say. Counsel, judge, and jury seemed to be pursuing their own course without reference to me. The first-named had evidently made careful plans as to the procedure he should follow. He continued his speech, and I soon became aware that if not speaking to me, he was speaking at me, and expected my intervention.

"I am not going to say just yet how the letter came into our hands; I shall leave that to my witness, Mary Winde. There is, however, one link in the chain apparently missing, and I think, my lord, that the prisoner alone can supply it. The letter refers to a document alleged to incriminate Enchmarsh directly. If that exists the prisoner can produce it or can give us some clue as to where it is. If necessary we can have him searched again, an operation which has perhaps not been performed as carefully as it might."

I went from red to pale. I had grown so accustomed to the zealous guarding of my secret that I could not even now pluck forth my deliverance.

"Unless the prisoner can show the court this confession," pursued counsel, in the tone of one giving disinterested advice on a comparatively unimportant matter, "the authenticity of the letter may be doubted."

I saw Ruth lift her head, and a quick glance of anxiety flash into her eyes. I realised that now Shotover was arrested and Enchmarsh dead, an attempt at concealment on my part would do more harm than any revelation I might choose to make. So I thrust my hand into my pocket, and drew out that paper of many vicissitudes.

It was barely legible. It was torn almost in half, smudged, and soiled. Counsel gave a shrug as he took it into his hands.

"I don't wonder the prisoner asked for a new one," he remarked. Then he read it :

"I, Harold Enchmarsh, hereby declare that I murdered my cousin, John Palehouse, by striking him on the temple with a pistol, in Plurenden Quarry, on the fourteenth of July, 1799."

There was sensation in court, and some promptly suppressed cheering. I saw the colour mount and glow on Ruth's cheeks. Then suddenly everything was swallowed up in mist, and I reeled.

"You may sit down, Lyte," said the judge, his voice seeming to come from a long way off ; and I sank on to the bench behind me, dazed and weak.

Counsel made an observation to the effect that he had persons present who knew Enchmarsh's hand-

his crime. What that bargain was the curate also knew. He knew that it was his own worthless life—made a burden even to himself by remorse and fear—that stood between an innocent man and his liberty. How that man had come to know his secret, the ghost which he thought walked only in his own dreams and Ruth's, he could but guess.

Mary had no mercy on him ; she wrung his confession from him. Then she did what only a woman would have the tact, the enterprise, the fearlessness to do ; she appealed to his courage. She bade that miserable coward be brave, be a hero, counteract by speedy sacrifice the evil he had done, make atonement for his unworthy, craven life by a glorious act of oblation. She pleaded, and his countenance changed ; the dead spirit quickened in him ; the dumb devil fled ; he spoke ; he said, " Let me go to the constable and give myself up."

I can only guess the workings of his soul. No doubt it was already weary of the struggle. His remorse had barely been appeased by the breaking off of his sister's engagement. The sin was clamouring to be confessed for its own vileness' sake. And that night, when he realised how a fellow-man was facing that from which he had fled, and was going to death for his sake and Ruth's—when a woman knelt at his feet, and pleaded with shaking voice and tear-blind eyes, the last redoubt of cowardice and selfishness gave way, and the true, noble, selfless man of him ruled in his heart.

Be causes what they may, the effects were these : He and Mary went hand-in-hand to the Ewehurst constable, and he gave himself up.

The constable was then called into the witness-box. He said that he had been routed out of his bed at one o'clock in the morning by Miss Winde and the curate-in-charge of the parish. The latter stepped towards him and cried :

" I have come to give myself up ; I have committed a murder." Mr. Shotover looked extremely disturbed and ill, but gave a clear account of his crime and of the motives which had induced him to confess.

Mary then showed the constable her letter, and asked him to arrest Enchmarsh. Apps told her that the evidence was very slight, as the letter might be a forgery, for all they knew. At all events, there must be considerable delay before a warrant could be procured, as the nearest magistrate lived more than six miles off. However, after some thought, he decided to arrest the Squire on the evidence in his possession, and, moreover, admitted that in a case of felony where he had good reason to believe the person accused was guilty, he could proceed without a warrant. So he and Mary set off for Kichenhour, leaving Guy in custody.

Counsel took the opportunity to say that Apps was to be commended for assuming this responsibility, but I gathered that this was chiefly because the event had justified a piece of independent action somewhat rash in one in his position.

"Miss Winde didn't come inside the house," said Constable Apps, "and it wur an unaccountable long time afore I cud knock anyone up. I wur töald that the master wur too tedious sick to see anybody whatsomever, but I said as how I'd come in the näum o' the law, and the sarvent-lad let me pass. Mus' Enchmarsh wur abed and asleep, but he wakes up when I comes into his room, and when he sees me and hears what I've got to say, he starts cussing and damning at such a räate as I wonders the Old Un didn't fly away wud un then and there. When föalkses asservates their innercence wud too many swears, I'se allus a bit slow at believing um, and I töald the Squire as how he must consider himself under arrest, and tried to put on the darbies. He struggled like a loonatic, but a sick man äun't much of a bruiser, me lord, and I got un fast. Then I showed un Miss Winde's letter, and, sakes ! I thought he wur going to have a fit, surely ! 'Where did yer git this, yer son of a harlot ?' And when I tells un, he rolls in the bed, and screams and cusses like all Bethlem Hospital. Then, right on a sudden, he lies still, gasping like a fish, and I runs to the door and calls the sarvent-lad to go and fetch another constable from Norjum and a doctor from wheresomever he cud get one. When I turns round I sees Mus' Enchmarsh riz up on his elber, a-putting of a bottle back on the table by his bedside. 'I had to take some doctor's stuff,' sez he ; 'I'm feeling that larmentable.' Then I looks to see what it is he's bin swallering, and I sees on the bottle, 'Pison ! Only

to be taken externally!' and he'd swallered the whole damn concern!

"Then I got in a tedious taking, and ran down and called the lad and Miss Winde, and we got some mustid and water, and tried to get the Squire's mouth open to mäake un swaller it; but though we near bröake his jaw, we cudn't get un t'unlock his teeth—and soon he goes all stiff-like and retches, and Miss Winde, she cries, 'Apps, go and fetch Parson Taylor from Norjum!' So I sends off the lad, and good old Parson comes running up in less than no time, and finds Mus' Enchmarsh in the sweat o' death."

Parson Taylor knew the main facts of my arrest and trial, and, being convinced as to the authenticity of the letter, at once realised the importance of inducing Enchmarsh to confess his guilt in terms. The Squire was dying fast, writhing on the tumbled bed, tearing the bed-clothes with his teeth; in his anguish he forgot that his admissions would save the hated Lyte, and allowed Taylor to drag from him a half-terrified, half-defiant avowal that he had killed Palehouse—"and I'm sorry I gave him such an easy death." A few minutes later he was seized with violent convulsions, and went to his account.

"Doctor Hewland comes up from Tice'ust," continued the constable; "but he wur a sight too late, and cud only tell us as how the Squire wur dead, which we knewed well enough. Then I and Miss Winde we goes back to Ewe'ust, and, Lord bless us! we finds Mus' Shotover a-lying on the lock-up floor,

wud the blood a-streaming from his mouth. So off my lad has to go for Doctor Hewland, and catches the pore gent just getting into his bed at five o'clock in the morning. Doctor Hewland brings the curate round, but sez he'll never live to be tried. Still, Mus' Shotover wur mad and frantic to be up at Maidstone to give evidence, and sez I, 'No doubt as he'll be useful.' So we ships un off in yester morning's coach, and kept un all cockered up at the inn last night. But this morning as soon as he gets to court he begins to spit blood and falls flat. So there he is, lying in one o' the side rooms, and the doctor here döan't think as how he'll ever be in the witness-box—or in the dock or at the gallers, neither !"

The constable's evidence was finished. He had had to be checked once or twice in his garrulity, but had persevered nevertheless in telling what was probably the most sensational story it would ever fall to his lot to repeat. When he had done, there were murmurings, and cries of " Silence !"

The Rector of Northiam—a good old man and a lover of the Word—then entered the witness-box and confirmed all Apps had said. He told the court that he had been roused at about three o'clock in the morning, and summoned to Enchmarsh's death-bed. The constable gave him the facts of the case, and showed him Mary Winde's letter. The effect this scrap of torn paper had produced on Enchmarsh, and the crime to which it had driven him, left in the witness little doubt as to its authenticity. But he at once saw the need for more trustworthy

evidence, and conjured the Squire not to enter his Maker's presence with a lie on his lips, but if he were guilty of the murder to confess it and save his soul. Enchmarsh was not the man to care much about his soul, but he was prostrated by horror and agony, and Mr. Taylor managed to wring from him two separate statements, which he wrote down then and there in his pocket-book, and which he now read to the court : " I killed John Palehouse, and I'm sorry I gave him such an easy death," and " I brained that fool of a Ranter, but I shan't live to be hanged for it." He also once cried out in his throes : " This is hellish, but it's not so hellish as hanging !"

The good parson came down from the witness-box, and I have only a dim recollection of what followed. A mist swam before my eyes. Every now and then it parted and showed me a face—the judge's, counsel's, Mary Winde's, or Ruth's. My trial was by no means ended. The judge spoke in low tones to the Sheriff, and counsel had a discussion with his attorney. I was asked by some one who spoke to me over the edge of the dock—I think it was the prosecuting attorney—if I could explain the presence of my pistol in Plurenden Quarry, but I only shook my head. Then after a vague while I realised that Gerald Frome had been brought into court, and called into the witness-box. I heard very little of his evidence, though every now and then a word, a disconnected phrase, drifted on to the ocean where my mind wandered derelict. I was full of strange delusions. I thought it was I who had betrayed

Ruth's secret, who had brought about the arrest of her brother. I moaned, twisted, struggled, and would have cried out had not one of the warders put his hand over my mouth.

After Frome had left the court, I recovered my faculties to some extent, and saw that counsel had once more risen.

"My lord," he said, "the evidence we have just heard is of such a nature that I feel compelled to take the responsibility of asking the jury—with your lordship's sanction—to acquit the prisoner. It is true that one important matter has not been cleared up—I refer to the finding of Lyte's pistol in Plurenden Quarry. But apparently there would be opportunities, of which Enchmarsh no doubt availed himself, for abstracting it with a view to casting suspicion on the wrong person. Be that as it may, Lyte's innocence seems beyond question—or, at all events, no jury would convict him now—and I cannot but express my belief that by a timely discovery of the true facts of the case, the prisoner has been saved from death on the gallows, and myself from being a participant in a miscarriage of justice."

He sat down amidst murmurs of applause, and though I was too faint and dazed to fully realise my good fortune, I felt grateful to the man who throughout the trial had acted so generously by me.

There was a brief silence ; then the judge said with unction :

"Mr. Lyte, it is with the greatest satisfaction that I have watched the progress of the trial during the

last few hours. The law is merciful as well as just, and rejoices to see innocence effectually vindicated. Still, Mr. Lyte, you have yourself to thank for all you have suffered, and I expect you are aware—and if not,” he added sharply, “you must be made aware—that in shielding both Shotover and Enchmarsh, you did not act the part of a good citizen, whose duty it is to denounce the criminal and to aid in furthering the ends of justice. You incurred a heavy responsibility, and if not actually accessory after the fact to two murders in such a sense as to render yourself amenable to the law, you were most certainly privy to them, and did nothing to bring the offenders to justice, which they have now apparently escaped. However, I shall say no more on that head. You, gentlemen”—he turned to the jury—“have heard all that has passed, and I feel sure you have done so with satisfaction. It is for you to say that Mr. Lyte is ‘Not Guilty.’”

There was subdued applause, then another silence, during which I sat too weary even to thank God. The jury had not, of course, retired, and suddenly I heard the clerk of the court put the question :

“Gentlemen, have you considered your verdict?”

“We find the prisoner not guilty.”

“You say that he is not guilty, and that is the verdict of you all.”

Then it was as if a black mist rushed on me, wrapped me round and stifled me. I thought I was in the dark cell, and cried, “Water, for the love of God!” then I knew no more.

"There, Lady Wychellow, lift his head a little higher. Now some more brandy—that's it!"

I opened my eyes and gazed round me. My head was on Lady Wychellow's lap.

"Ruth," I murmured faintly.

"She is with her brother. There, do not knit your brows so. Close your eyes, and don't fret."

I shut my eyes obediently, but I fretted hard. Where was I? What had happened? Ah, I remembered—I had betrayed Ruth. I had saved myself by revealing her secret after having been faithful almost unto death. I writhed my head on Lady Wychellow's knee and moaned.

"What's troubling you, dear lad?" asked a voice I knew to be Peter Winde's.

"Ruth," I murmured, "I have betrayed Ruth—she told me a secret—I revealed it to save my life!"

"No, no, lad. You're raving. You kept it to the end. Your poor mind's been brooding so fiercely over this confidence that you've come to think you've betrayed it. Nothing of the sort! Don't you remember how Mary found your letter, how Shotover confessed, how Enchmarsh——"

I passed my hand over my forehead. Then I started up.

"Yes, I remember. Oh, Mr. Winde, am I free? Shan't I have to go back to jail?"

I gripped his hands, and a shudder passed over me.

"No, poor fellow, your prison days are over, thank the Lord!"

"Where am I now?"

A voice from behind me answered:

"In one of the anterooms of the court, egad! You were carried here after you fainted in the dock."

I turned round, and saw Sir Miles Wychellow. I held out my hand to him; he had been a good friend to me.

"Well, Don Quixote," he said huskily, "your campaign is over."

"Why do you call me Don Quixote?"

"Begad! Because Cervantes said, 'Don Quixote is a madman!'"

"You think I was mad to shield Shotover?"

"I don't think it was a particularly sensible thing to do."

"But I did it for Ruth's sake."

Peter Winde pressed my hand.

"I understand you, dear lad," he said kindly; "and God will accept your sacrifice."

"Where's Mary?"

"She—she felt faint and ill, and went to rest at our inn. You shall go there soon, but first you must speak a word of comfort to a poor soul that's passing into God's presence sorely sin-stained."

"Shotover?"

"Yes. He's in the next room."

"Dying?"

"I'm afraid so. The doctor gives him no hope. He has been in a decline since winter, and all the horror and excitement of the last two days have

brought on a terrible bleeding from the lungs. He's so weak that the doctor won't allow him even to be moved to an inn. He'll die before the stars come out."

"I will go to him—if you really think I can give him any comfort."

"I am sure you can. He has been asking for you. Poor fellow! He wants your forgiveness."

I rose with difficulty to my feet.

"Gad! hadn't you better rest a while before seeing him?" said Sir Miles.

"I would rather go to him now."

Peter Winde made me lean on his arm, and led me into the next room.

Shotover lay on the floor, for the place was bare of furniture, but his head was softly pillowed on his sister's lap, and her red hair fell and touched his face, while in his own hair I saw her fingers twisted. She lifted her eyes as I came in, and said:

"He's here."

"Come to my side and take my hand. . . . I'm dying, and I can't see. . . . Are we alone?"

"Yes," for Peter Winde had stolen away.

"That's well. . . . I'm not going to thank you—I could never do it. . . . It would take a lifetime, and I shall be dead in an hour. All I want to do is—this!"

He took Ruth's hand, and laid it in mine.

My fingers closed round hers hungrily. Neither of us spoke. We were united after long parting, and after much tossing had reached the haven where

we would be. Silently she laid her face against mine, and I kissed her cheek and the tears upon it.

Guy turned his head on Ruth's knee, and sobbed.

"God forgive me for keeping you two apart! What a wreck I have made of my life! What a wreck I have all but made of your love! . . . What shall I answer God when He reckoneth with me? . . . 'Love without sacrifice is dead.' . . . Then I have never loved . . . and how shall I, having never loved, enter the presence of God Who is Love?"

He groaned aloud, and I sought for words to comfort him. But I could think of nothing save a sentence from the Communion service he used to read so reverently. I laid my hand on his forehead, and whispered :

"'Not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'"

After that he lay quieter, while a little breeze, sweet enough to have been born in Sussex, blew in upon us.

"Ruth," said the dying man at last, and his voice was only a whisper, "I want to hear you say that you forgive me."

"Why will you speak this way? What have I to forgive? Have I not thanked God for you, and loved you most when you sinned most?"

"'Loved most when sinning most.' Such is the love of women. 'Not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences.' Such is the love of God."

And with that he died.

We could not mourn for him who had escaped the

gallows by dying in the arms of those he loved. We closed his eyes and smoothed the hair upon his forehead, and Ruth kissed his lips. The sunshine crept up to the wall, and the little wind began to blow chilly. Still we sat hand in hand, our tears falling like a benediction on the face of the dead man upon our knees.

CHAPTER XX

OF THE METHODIST AND THE RETURN WITH JOY

BEFORE the evening was very far advanced I again became light-headed, and as there was no room for me at the Black Ship, where the Wychellows were staying, I was put to bed in a little chamber in the New Inn, where Peter and Mary lodged. Peter sat with me through the whole night, during which I tossed in almost ceaseless delirium. I was possessed once more with the idea that I had betrayed Ruth's secret, and Peter afterwards told me that he had often to hold me down in bed, so frantically did I struggle to rise and fling myself at Ruth's feet, beseeching her forgiveness. It is strange, but to this day this phantom haunts me, and I constantly wake trembling, with the belief that I have been faithless to the most solemn trust ever confided to me.

During my few clear intervals I lay quiet and contented, fingering the sheets which were so clean and soft, or turning myself lazily on the feather mattress. I felt that all this cleanliness, comfort, and peace must be a dream, and that I should soon wake to find myself in jail, amidst stench, dirt, airlessness, and crowded unwashed humanity.

About eleven o'clock I was conscious. Peter had just made me swallow some milk, and had laid me back on the pillow as tenderly as my mother might have done if she had cared for me. There was a knock at the door, and I heard Mary's voice.

"Father, go downstairs and have some supper. I'll watch by Humphrey while you are away."

Peter glanced at me as I lay with my cheek on my hand, breathing softly.

"He's quiet enough now, poor lad. Thank you, dearie, I'll go down if you will stay here, and remember to call me if he gets excited."

She promised, and soon the door closed after him.

Mary pulled a chair up to the lamp, and drew a little book out of her pocket. I lay watching her with drowsy half-closed eyes.

"Mary," I said suddenly.

"What is it, Humphrey? I thought you were asleep."

"I've never said 'Thank you' for all you've done for me."

"I did nothing—except what anyone else would have done in such a case. It was God Who showed strength with His arm."

"I have thanked Him, but I have not thanked you. Come to the bedside, and let me thank you as I ought."

Mary rose, and came mechanically to the foot of the bed.

"I tell you that you've nothing to thank me for," she exclaimed with some abruptness. "Please do not say any more about it."

She drew aside the window curtain and looked out. The moon and stars were shining. I sighed rapturously.

"Oh, Mary, how sweet it is to see the moon without any bars between. I saw her last night in jail, and there was a great black bar across her face."

"I'll leave the curtain drawn back if you like it."

"Thank you. What a glorious sky! Mary, don't you remember—the moon was lying on her back just like that when you and I met for the first time, when we ate our supper in the hayloft?"

"I am not likely to forget," she answered sharply. I had never seen Mary in this strange abrupt mood before.

She evidently realised that she had spoken hastily, for she turned round from the window with a smile.

"Let me arrange your pillows for you," she said in a voice that trembled; "they are almost on the floor."

She shook and smoothed them. Her hand happened to touch my hair, and she drew it hurriedly away.

"Now try to go to sleep. Are you comfortable?"

"Yes, thank you, Mary."

She went and sat once more in the lamplight, and opened her book. Suddenly I saw a tear fall on the page. I shut my eyes, and drew the bedclothes high over my head.

A few minutes later I fell asleep, and dreamed that I was at Shoyswell, and that Mary and I sat in the

gable barn among the hay, as on the night of our first meeting. We watched the moonlight in the fold and on the fleeces of the sheep, while the little moon lay on her back between the oasts, and Mary sang, "Glory to Thee, my God, this night."

The song died away in a sudden scream of wind outside the casement, and I awoke. Mary had left the room ; Peter sat in her place. The window was still uncurtained, but the moon was gone, and there were raindrops on the pane.

The next morning Peter urged me to stay in bed. But I was far too restless, and I thirsted to see Ruth. So, after a little persuasion, he gave in, and lent me some clothes to wear instead of my own rags and tatters.

My heart was full of fears as I walked, leaning on a stick, up the High Street to the sign of the Black Ship. It was true that Shotover had put Ruth's hand in mine ; he was free from all pride, and demanded of Ruth's husband but one qualification—that he should love her even as she loved him. Yet Sir Miles was different, and now Shotover was dead, he had the direction of Ruth's affairs. I remembered how coldly he had looked on our love when I was in prison, and my heart failed me.

I soon reached the inn, and asking for Miss Shotover, was shown into a private sitting-room. A few minutes later the door opened, and I sprang forward eagerly to meet—not Ruth—but Sir Miles ! To my surprise, he grasped my hand, and clapped me heartily on the shoulder.

"Begad, young man, you look better after a decent night's rest. Ruth slept ill, and is only just risen, but she will be with us in a moment."

I gazed at him bewildered.

"Sir Miles, do you know what Guy Shotover said ? what he did ?"

The baronet looked graver.

"I know it, my lad. I was with the poor fellow a few minutes yesterday morning, and, though every time he spoke he nigh suffocated, he begged me not to keep you and Ruthie apart."

He was silent a moment, then continued :

"I don't deny, young man, that I had looked higher for the child. You're gently born, I know, but I wanted her to lead an easy life, and have a house of her own, and servants, and silk gowns, and such things as a maid loves. But after what happened yesterday I have come to think differently. A man who could suffer so much for her sake, even though he be poor and friendless, is worthy of her—yes, lad, you've proved yourself worthy;" and he clasped my hand once more.

I was too much moved to reply.

"And now," he continued, "I've some questions to ask you. When is the marriage to be ?"

I gnawed my lip angrily.

"It's all very well to speak of marriage when I haven't a penny in the world."

"But, my dear fellow, now poor Shotover's dead, Ruthie has enough——"

"Sir Miles, if you think——"

"There, there—don't devour me quite. I didn't mean that you should live on her money. What I wanted to say was this—that what she has and what you can earn ought to be enough for you both."

"But I don't earn anything—at least, except as a farm-hand. Do you refer to that?"

"I do. Gad! if you take Ruth on the roads with you, you will have to sleep under a roof. You must lie at inns instead of in the fields, and have rafters, not clouds, over your heads in time of rain."

"But I never thought of taking her on the roads. I can't imagine her tramping the highways, and being hungry and tired. She has not been bred for such a life."

"You mean to wait till you have a chapel somewhere—which may never be at all. Egad! as you young people insist on being married, and as I'm weak enough to allow it, there had better be no waiting; that would be dreary enough for the girl as well as for you. Besides, she is less unfit for the roads than you for Little Bethel. My lad, you're a vagrant born, and I'd rather see Ruthie wearing out her soles on the highway than you eating out your heart among streets, chimneys, and conventionality. And she need not be hungry or tired, you can take care of that."

"Then you mean," I cried, trembling, "that we can be married at once?"

"As soon as the banns are up—certainly."

I bowed my head. The room swayed and seemed full of fire.

"And Ruth?" I asked faintly. "What does she think of this?"

"What I think, lad, and what you think—and here she is to tell you the same."

The door opened, and Ruth came in. Sir Miles slipped out, but before he was well away I had caught her to my breast. She was all in white except for a black ribbon twisted in her hair, in token of her love and sorrow for the dear, unworthy Guy. She felt a thin, frail thing as I clasped her to me, but the shadow was quite flown from her eyes.

It was some time before I recovered my health and strength, and I spent the days of convalescence happily enough. Every one was good to me; it was sweet to lie alone in the little room in the gable, and the hours when I sat with Ruth's hand in mine and her cheek against mine were unutterably blessed.

About a week after my release I was visited by my friend in adversity, Gerald Frome. I had not forgotten him when God opened to me the prison gates, but had written to him, and had sent him what little comforts I could afford. As soon as he was set free he came to thank me, and to ask me for my prayers. It was he, not I, who deserved thanks, for without his care and tenderness, and the support of his arm in a terrible time, I verily believe I should have died. I earnestly prayed our Lord to have mercy on him, to save him from the old curse, and lead him to better things. Three months later he

died. Perhaps that was the only possible answer to my prayer.

Peter and Mary Winde were unable to stay in Kent for my marriage. Peter was obliged to be back at Shoyswell for the hop-picking, and he and his daughter left Maidstone about a week after my release. It struck me that Mary was eager to go.

On the evening of their departure I was sitting alone in the inn parlour, when they came to me.

"We start for Sussex in an hour," said Peter, "and before we go, we both want to give a wedding present to the lad who has been a son and a brother to us."

"You have indeed been a father and a sister to me."

"We had some difficulty in choosing our gifts, for how can we give you house-linen, china, damask or such things as are usually given at a marriage, when the sky is to be your roof, the soil your floor, the tree-stump your table, and when the landlady of the White Hart or the Blue Boar will provide the sheets for your bed? So you must forgive me if I make this my present."

He handed me a small tin box, which I found to contain a cheque for five pounds, and while I was seeking in vain for words to thank him, Mary gave me a Bible bound in black leather, and told me she had given one like it to Ruth.

"So you can think of me when you read God's word."

"I shall always think of you, Mary," I cried, my tongue loosed at last; "I shall always think of you,

Mr. Winde. You are my truest, dearest friends, of whom I am not worthy."

Tears choked my voice, and Peter shook my hand and laid the other hand on my breast, and if I had not known him for a staunch Methodist, I should have thought he had made the sign of the cross there.

Then I turned to Mary, and was seized with the old impulse. I did not resist it this time, but caught her in my arms and gave her my first and only kiss. I felt how hot her cheek was under my lips, and her hand in mine was trembling and burning. When I drew back and looked into her eyes, I could have sacrificed all I possessed not to have given that kiss.

"The coach leaves the Star Inn at half-past eight," said Peter, breaking the awkward silence. "Mary, you and I must be starting. You will come with us, lad?"

"Certainly. Have you said good-bye to Ruth?"

"We've just been to the Black Ship. Come, Mary, run upstairs and put on your hat and cloak, my dearie."

A few minutes later Peter, Mary, and I were on our way to the Star. The sun had set, and the sky was iron grey, flushed in the west. We had not long to wait till the coach was ready to start. Then a hasty pressure of hands, and good wishes called on the night air, while the Maidstone Rocket rattled over the courtyard stones.

I walked back to my inn with a slow, grave step, and sat for some time brooding alone; but at ten

o'clock I went to see Ruth, and forgot all my depression.

After that the days flew quickly, till our wedding morning, the twentieth of September, broke at last. We were to be married very early, for we wished to leave Maidstone by the nine o'clock coach. This would reach the cross-roads of Three Chimneys at noon. Then my wife and I would walk to Ewehurst to superintend the selling of the Parsonage furniture and livestock, and that tramp through the Kentish and Sussex lanes should be our honeymoon.

I rose at five and dressed all trembling. My heart was full of a joy as pure and an awe as sweet as that with which it had throbbed on the morning of my confirmation or of my first sacrament. The streets were dim with morning fog, which did not reach as far as the housetops, so that from my window in the gable I looked down on a creamy, opaque sea. Once out of doors, the thick yellowness was all round me, and I groped my way with difficulty to All Saints' Church.

Inside the church everything was very dark, and I had to call up a sleepy old verger to draw up the blinds and light a few lamps that parson might see to read the service.

I was early, and knelt for some time alone in one of the worm-eaten pews. A robin was twittering outside, and I thanked God for that little song of hope. Ruth arrived at last with Sir Miles and Lady Wychellow. My bride wore no jewels or brocades,

lace or veiling, only a simple muslin gown, with roses at her breast, and a chip hat tied with broad ribbons under her chin. She was, and looked, a child, but sorrow had crowned her with an early tender womanhood. I kissed her silently, and we knelt in the old pew side by side.

On the stroke of seven, parson bustled in, his surplice crackling with starch. He was a brisk, excitable little man, and evidently enjoyed the romance of a wedding at such an early hour. The service was soon over, and Ruth and I came hand-in-hand from the communion rails, wedded husband and wife, "for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death us do part."

The fog still lay thick upon the streets, but the rays of the risen sun made crimson smears on its yellowness. We went to the Black Ship Inn, where a simple wedding-breakfast was prepared, and I do not think that Ruth and I spoke a word the whole of our way. After breakfast we said good-bye to the Wychellows, for we were to walk to the coach alone. The good baronet and his wife knew that we needed no company in our happiness.

On reaching the Star we found we had nearly half an hour to wait before the coach started, but it is strange how quickly the time passed, though we did little more than stand hand-in-hand and watch the clouds in their lazy drift. Then "Take your seats, ladies and gentlemen!" cried the guard, and all was bustle and confusion. The next moment the horses had plunged forward as the ostlers let go their heads,

and we were lurching and rolling out of the yard and down the street.

Maidstone was soon behind us ; the jail, with all its hideousness of sin and sorrow, was like a dream from which we wake shuddering and thanking God that it is day. My past life seemed to me then as a baptism of tears, from which I had come strengthened, healed, and purified.

Through hopfields and orchards, heavy with their September riches, through cornfields where reapers bent whistling over their toil, where scythes swished and hones sang. Through Shepway, Wormlake, Stallance, and Motynden, and thus to Headcorn, where we stopped to water the horses. Then on past Great Love, Hungerden, and merry little Shepherds-well, till suddenly the coach drew up at the cross-roads of Three Chimneys, and the next moment Ruth and I were left standing beside the bundle that held our chattels, watching a cloud of dust spin away towards Cranbrook.

We were at the same cross-roads where the constable and I had stopped the Maidstone coach barely two months ago. Then I wore gyves on my wrists, now my only shackles were Ruth's soft hands, clasped over mine as she put her lips to my face.

"Humphrey—husband!"

I could not answer for gladness, but kissed her mouth and took her hand, and led her down the lane.

We had a long tramp in front of us, but heat and

weariness seemed to have taken fright at our love, and to flee before our face. We walked gaily hand-in-hand, singing like children. At Dockenden we halted, and went into a field through which ran a little stream. By the side of this stream we ate our mid-day meal of bread and cheese, and drank of the delicious water, Ruth drinking from my hands. Then suddenly my heart reproached me.

"Little girl, you have been gently bred, and here am I taking you to tramp the roads with me!"

"Faith! That's just what I love, Humphrey."

"But you are too sweet and delicate to be a common mumper's wife."

"What nonsense you talk! As if you were a common mumper!"

"You will often be tired."

"I shall not mind with you beside me."

"You will have a frugal board and a hard bed."

"I shall not mind with you to share them."

"Ruth, how can you sacrifice so much for a fellow like me?"

"Lud! I'd sacrifice the world for a fellow like you. But come, Humphrey, why should you and I reason together in this way? When I promised to share your life, I didn't mean only the sweetness and the sunshine of it, but also the bitterness and the rain. Now, let's hurry on, or we shall never reach Ewehurst to-night."

As it happened, we did not reach Ewehurst that

night, for in spite of Ruth's words we loitered on our way, and night fell as we reached Crit Hall. We did not care. Love prefers starlight to sunlight. Our tongues were loosed, and we talked of many things—of our first meeting, of Shoyswell, the Windes, and of John Palehouse. Then we talked of Guy, and our voices fell to whispers.

On and on, past Beretilt and Four Wents, across the Furnace Stream, through the uncanny shades of Mopesden Wood. We had left the road, for the grass was softer than the marl to our feet.

"Ruth," I said, "we must be nearing Sussex."

The night was very wonderful. The great flat fields lay round us in a stillness broken by the sough of the wind through the grass and spurge. Evening moths, fat and white, fluttered heavily in and out of the fennel and chervil, waving like fragile spooks in the light of the first stars. It was a perfect ghost time. We found it hard to believe that those tall, pale forms which appeared and disappeared in the dark were only the giant hemlock as the wind waved them in and out of the moonlight. An owl raised his note of sadness, the whirr of bats' wings troubled the brooding air. Far away at Soul's Green a bell was tinkling, now clear, now soft, as the wind swept it, and every now and then an unusually strong puff brought the bleating of some outcast from the fold.

"Ruth," I cried, "how sweet the country is to a man who has been in prison!"

We tramped on, and passed a group of cottages

known as Delmonden. Their little windows shed oblongs of light upon our path, and by that light I saw the tears hanging in Ruth's eyes like stars.

"Wife," I said, "directly we are in Sussex I shall kiss you."

"But how will you know when we are in Sussex? We are nowhere near the Rother."

"But the Kent Ditch, dear. We shall cross the Kent Ditch—and then I shall kiss you."

Only a few yards further on we came to a reedy channel, where the wind swept the osiers with a moaning sound.

"There is no bridge," said Ruth.

"I'm glad there is no bridge," said I. And I caught her up in my arms, and waded with her across the Kent Ditch, and clambered on to the shore of my goodly heritage.

We were in a hop-garden, and the wind gently bowed the overweighted vines, while their steamy scent crept into my nostrils, soothing and sweet. The night was very clear, or rather let me say the morning, for it was past one, and the autumn lay an hour old on the breast of the sky, swaddled in stars.

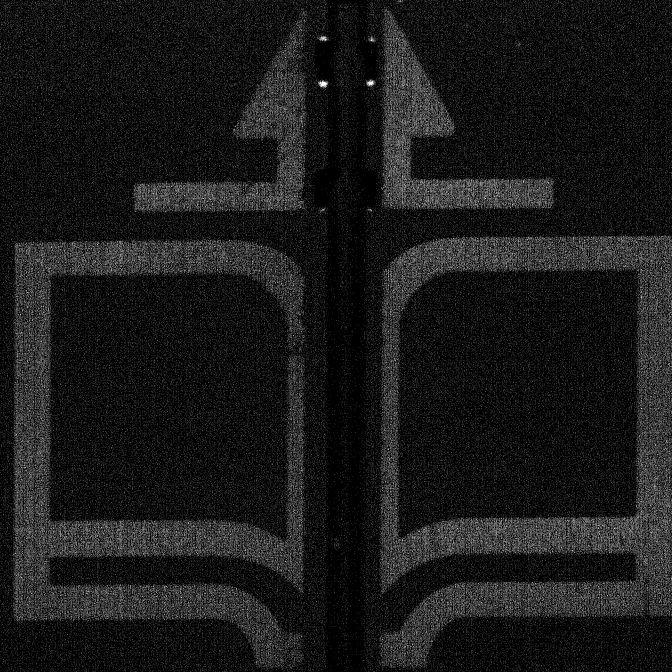
"Wife!" I cried, and clasped her to me, and kissed her again and again. It seemed as if I should never have my fill of kisses.

When at last I drew back my head, she stole her arms round me, and looked up into my face. Two tears crept down her cheeks; one fell on her lip, and I kissed it away. The wind lifted a sob, and swept

upon us from the huddling fields of Kent, and blew a strand of Ruth's hair across my mouth. I held it there while the blast sobbed again—blustered—and was still. Far, far away, a shooting star crossed the sky above Shoyswell, and I saw it sink among the woods like a burning eye.

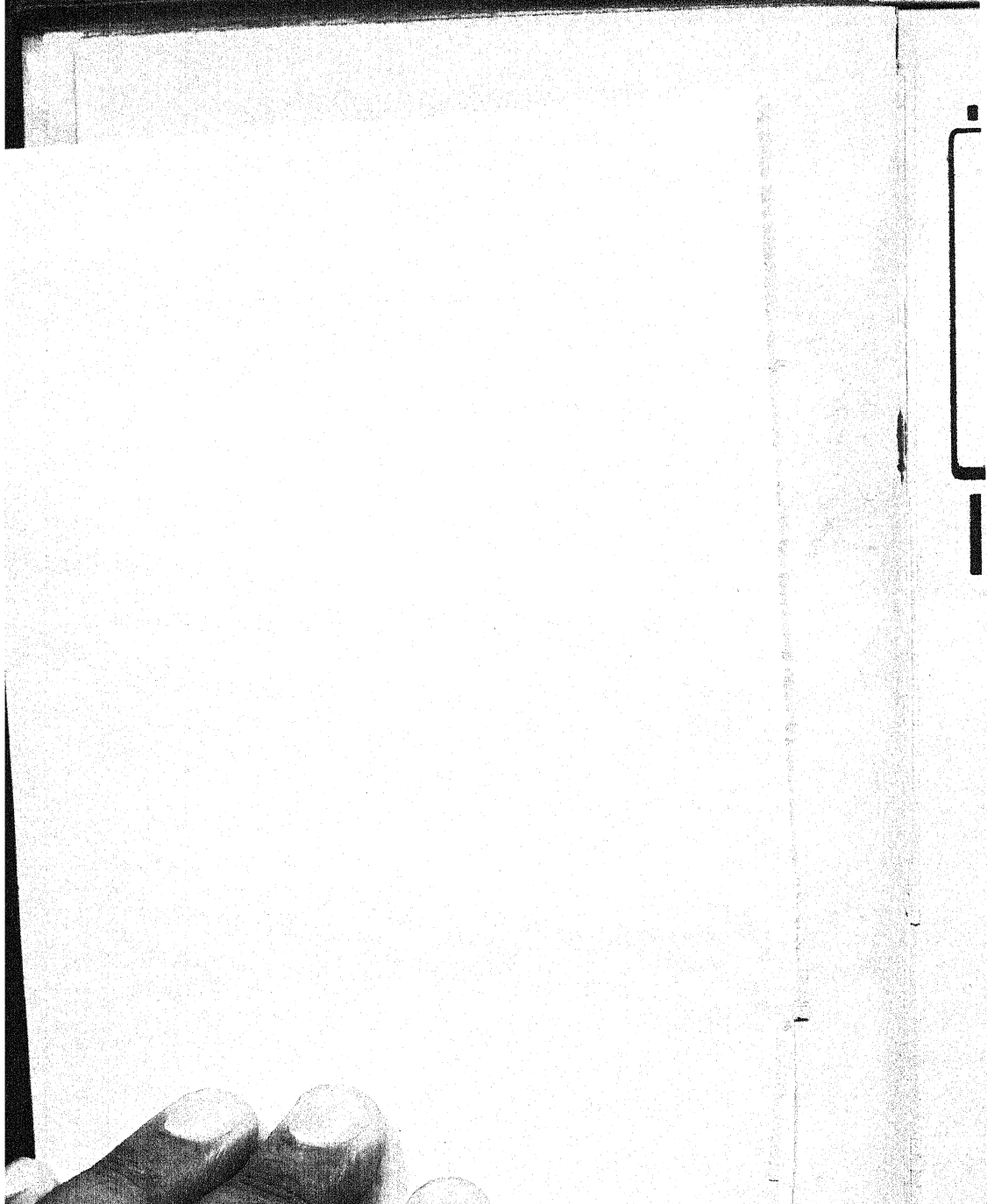
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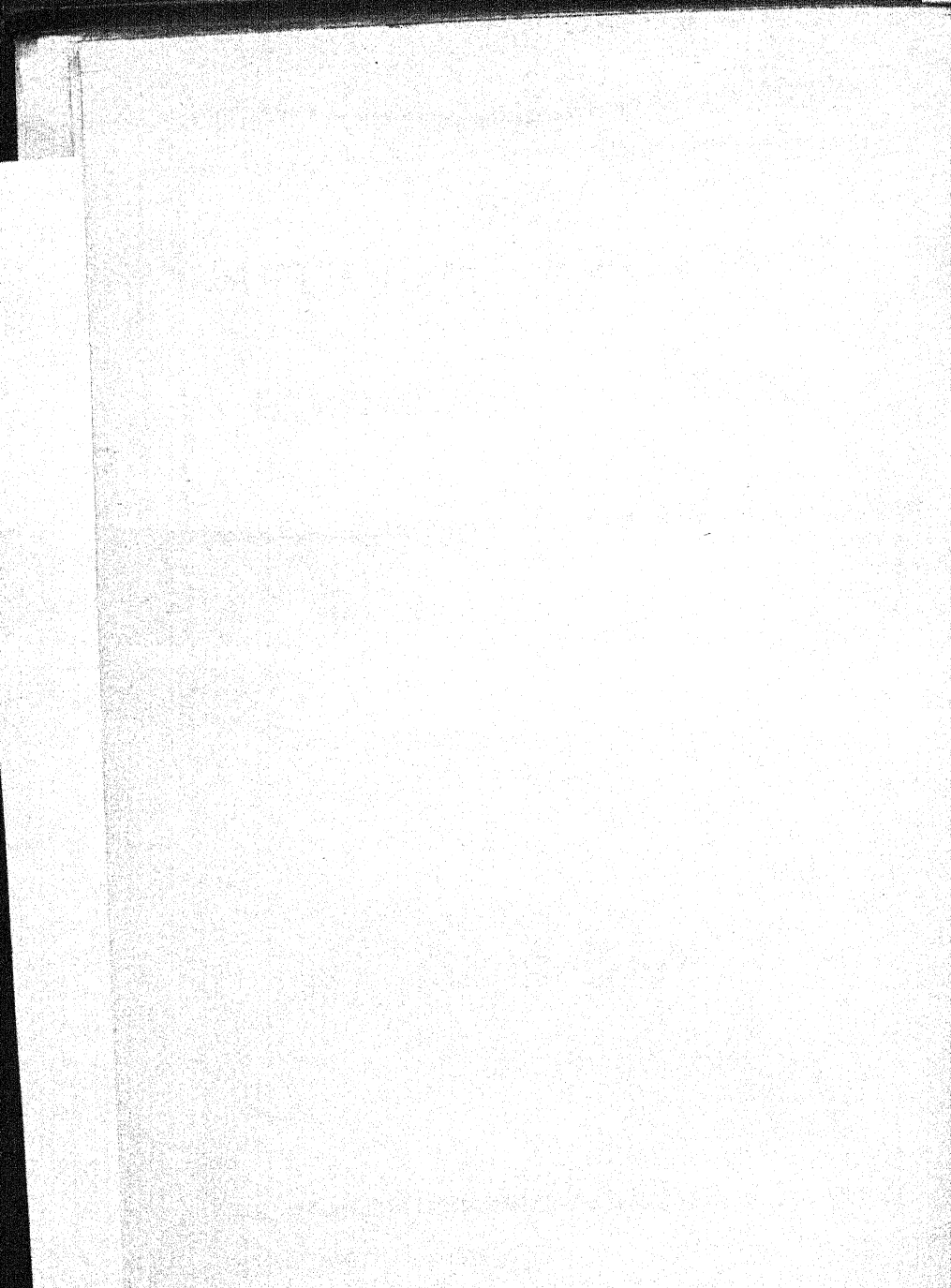




THE
SURGEON'S DAUGHTER
AND
CASTLE DANGEROUS

BY
SIR WALTER SCOTT
BART:





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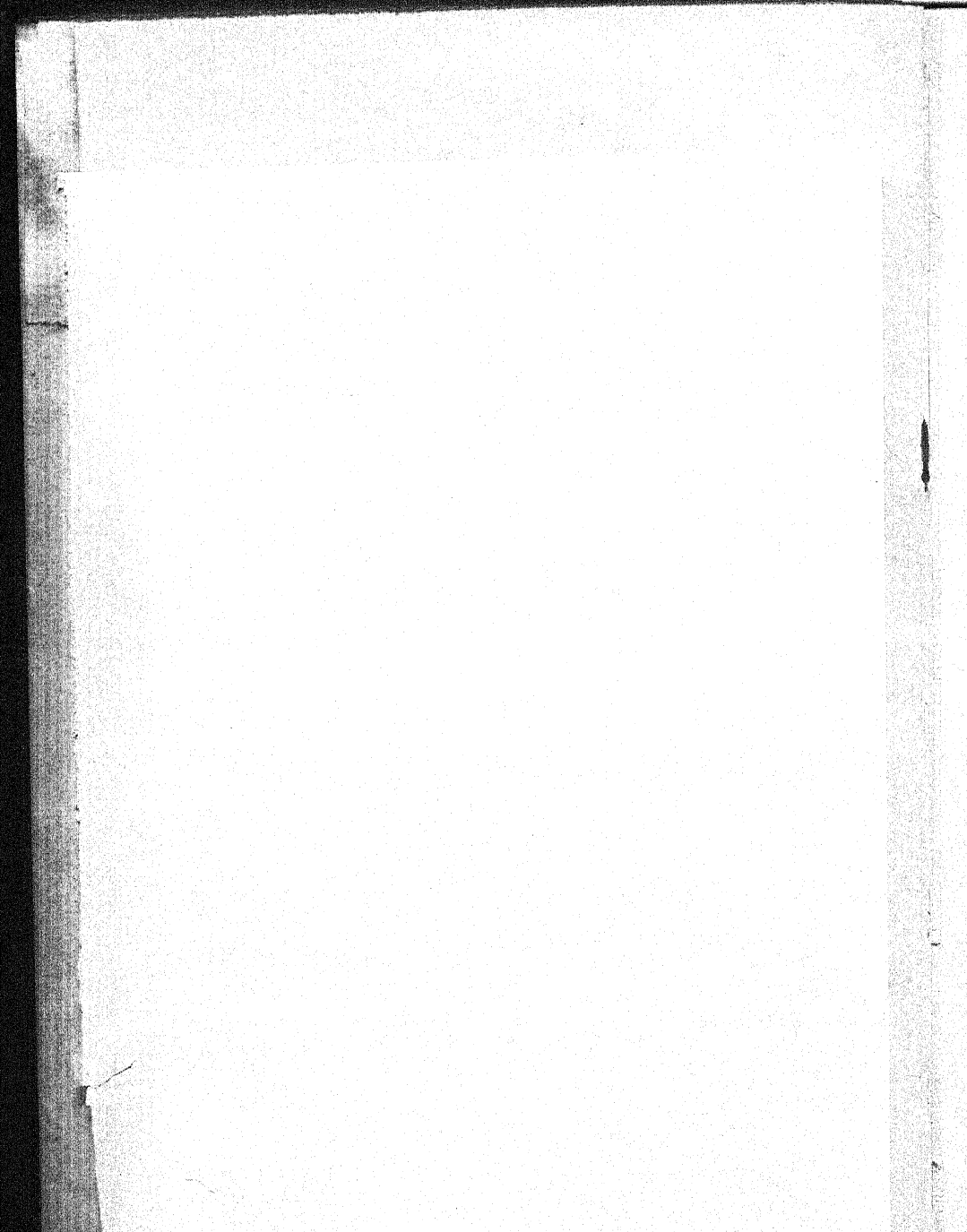
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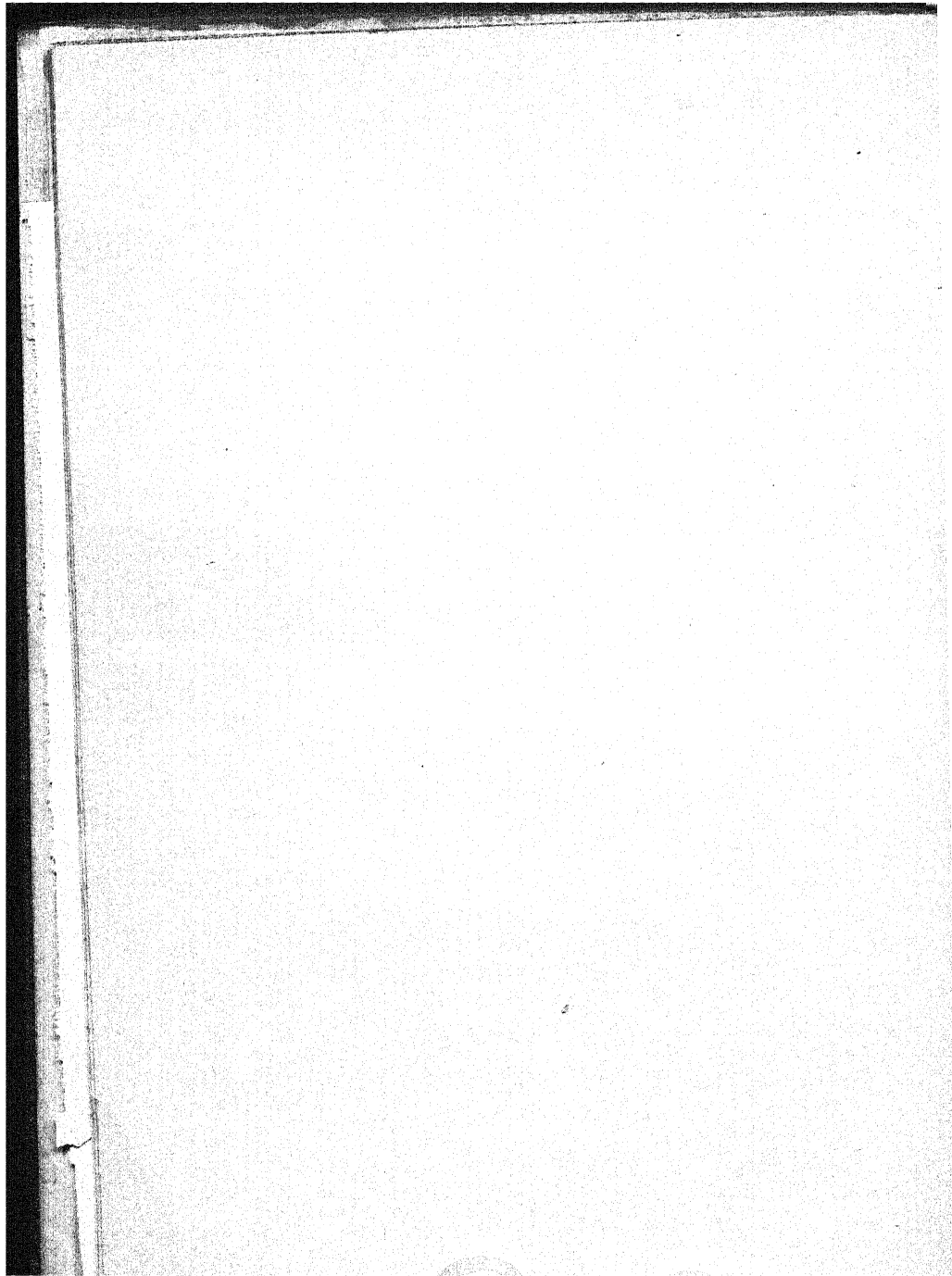
THE WAVERLEY NOVELS

HOLYROOD EDITION

VOLUME XXV

THE SURGEON'S DAUGHTER
CASTLE DANGEROUS





MR. CROFTANGRY'S PREFACE

Indite, my muse, indite,
Subpoena'd is thy lyre,
The praises to requite
Which rules of court require.
Probationary Odes.

THE concluding a literary undertaking, in whole or in part, is, to the inexperienced at least, attended with an irritating titillation, like that which attends on the healing of a wound—a prurient impatience, in short, to know what the world in general, and friends in particular, will say to our labours. Some authors, I am told, profess an oyster-like indifference upon this subject; for my own part, I hardly believe in their sincerity. Others may acquire it from habit; but in my poor opinion a neophyte like myself must be for a long time incapable of such *sang froid*.

Frankly, I was ashamed to feel how childishly I felt on the occasion. No person could have said prettier things than myself upon the importance of stoicism concerning the opinion of others, when their applause or censure refers to literary character only; and I had determined to lay my work before the public with the same unconcern with which the ostrich lays her eggs in the sand, giving herself no farther trouble concerning the incubation, but leaving to the atmosphere to bring forth the young, or otherwise, as the climate shall serve. But, though an ostrich in theory, I became in practice a poor hen, who has no sooner made her deposit but she runs cackling about, to call the attention of every one to the wonderful work which she has performed.

As soon as I became possessed of my first volume, neatly stitched up and boarded, my sense of the necessity of communicating with some one became ungovernable. Janet was inexorable, and seemed already to have tired of my literary

confidence; for whenever I drew near the subject, after evading it as long as she could, she made, under some pretext or other, a bodily retreat to the kitchen or the cock-loft, her own peculiar and inviolate domains. My publisher would have been a natural resource; but he understands his business too well, and follows it too closely, to desire to enter into literary discussions, wisely considering that he who has to sell books has seldom leisure to read them. Then my acquaintance, now that I have lost Mrs. Bethune Baliol, are of that distant and accidental kind to whom I had not face enough to communicate the nature of my uneasiness, and who probably would only have laughed at me had I made any attempt to interest them in my labours.

Reduced thus to a sort of despair, I thought of my friend and man of business, Mr. Fairscribe. His habits, it was true, were not likely to render him indulgent to light literature, and, indeed, I had more than once noticed his daughters, and especially my little songstress, whip into her reticule what looked very like a circulating library volume, as soon as her father entered the room. Still, he was not only my assured, but almost my only, friend, and I had little doubt that he would take an interest in the volume for the sake of the author which the work itself might fail to inspire. I sent him, therefore, the book, carefully sealed up, with an intimation that I requested the favour of his opinion upon the contents, of which I affected to talk in the depreciatory style which calls for point-blank contradiction, if your correspondent possess a grain of civility.

This communication took place on a Monday, and I daily expected (what I was ashamed to anticipate by volunteering my presence, however sure of a welcome) an invitation to eat an egg, as was my friend's favourite phrase, or a card to drink tea with Misses Fairscribe, or a provocation to breakfast, at least, with my hospitable friend and benefactor, and to talk over the contents of my inclosure. But the hours and days passed on from Monday till Saturday, and I had no acknowledgment whatever that my packet had reached its destination. 'This is very unlike my good friend's punctuality,' thought I; and having again and again vexed James, my male attendant, by a close examination concerning the time, place, and delivery, I had only to strain my imagination to conceive reasons for my friend's silence. Sometimes I thought that his opinion of the work had proved so unfavourable, that he was averse to

hurt my feelings by communicating it; sometimes that, escaping his hands to whom it was destined, it had found its way into his writing-chamber, and was become the subject of criticism to his smart clerks and conceited apprentices. 'Sdeath!' thought I, 'if I were sure of this, I would ——'

'And what would you do?' said Reason, after a few moments' reflection. 'You are ambitious of introducing your book into every writing and reading chamber in Edinburgh, and yet you take fire at the thoughts of its being criticised by Mr. Fairscribe's young people? Be a little consistent, for shame.'

'I will be consistent,' said I, doggedly; 'but for all that, I will call on Mr. Fairscribe this evening.'

I hastened my dinner, donned my greatcoat, for the evening threatened rain, and went to Mr. Fairscribe's house. The old domestic opened the door cautiously, and before I asked the question, said, 'Mr. Fairscribe is at home, sir; but it is Sunday night.' Recognising, however, my face and voice, he opened the door wider, admitted me, and conducted me to the parlour, where I found Mr. Fairscribe and the rest of his family engaged in listening to a sermon by the late Mr. Walker of Edinburgh,¹ which was read by Miss Catherine with unusual distinctness, simplicity, and judgment. Welcomed as a friend of the house, I had nothing for it but to take my seat quietly, and, making a virtue of necessity, endeavour to derive my share of the benefit arising from an excellent sermon. But I am afraid Mr. Walker's force of logic and precision of expression were somewhat lost upon me. I was sensible I had chosen an improper time to disturb Mr. Fairscribe, and when the discourse was ended I rose to take my leave, somewhat hastily, I believe. 'A cup of tea, Mr. Croftangry?' said the young lady. 'You will wait and take part of a Presbyterian supper?' said Mr. Fairscribe. 'Nine o'clock—I make it a point of keeping my father's hours on Sunday at e'en. Perhaps Dr. —— (naming an excellent clergyman) may look in.'

I made my apology for declining his invitation; and I fancy my unexpected appearance and hasty retreat had rather surprised my friend, since, instead of accompanying me to the door, he conducted me into his own apartment.

'What is the matter,' he said, 'Mr. Croftangry? This is not a night for secular business, but if anything sudden or extraordinary has happened ——'

¹ Robert Walker, the colleague and rival of Dr. Hugh Blair, in St. Giles's Church, Edinburgh.

'Nothing in the world,' said I, forcing myself upon confession, as the best way of clearing myself out of the scrape; 'only — only I sent you a little parcel, and as you are so regular in acknowledging letters and communications, I — I thought it might have miscarried — that's all.'

My friend laughed heartily, as if he saw into and enjoyed my motives and my confusion. 'Safe! It came safe enough,' he said. 'The wind of the world always blows its vanities into haven. But this is the end of the session, when I have little time to read anything printed except Inner House papers; yet if you will take your kail with us next Saturday, I will glance over your work, though I am sure I am no competent judge of such matters.'

With this promise I was fain to take my leave, not without half persuading myself that, if once the phlegmatic lawyer began my lucubrations, he would not be able to rise from them till he had finished the perusal, nor to endure an interval betwixt his reading the last page and requesting an interview with the author.

No such marks of impatience displayed themselves. Time, blunt or keen, as my friend Joanna says, swift or leisurely, held his course; and on the appointed Saturday I was at the door precisely as it struck four. The dinner hour, indeed, was five punctually, but what did I know but my friend might want half an hour's conversation with me before that time? I was ushered into an empty drawing-room, and, from a needle-book and work-basket, hastily abandoned, I had some reason to think I interrupted my little friend, Miss Katie, in some domestic labour more praiseworthy than elegant. In this critical age filial piety must hide herself in a closet if she has a mind to darn her father's linen.

Shortly after I was the more fully convinced that I had been too early an intruder, when a wench came to fetch away the basket, and recommend to my courtesies a red and green gentleman in a cage, who answered all my advances by croaking out, 'You're a fool — you're a fool, I tell you!' until, upon my word, I began to think the creature was in the right. At last my friend arrived a little overheated. He had been taking a turn at golf to prepare him for 'colloquy sublime.' And wherefore not, since the game, with its variety of odds, lengths, bunkers, tee'd balls, and so on, may be no inadequate representation of the hazards attending literary pursuits? In particular, those formidable buffets which make one ball spin

through the air like a rifle-shot, and strike another down into the very earth it is placed upon, by the maladroitness or the malicious purpose of the player — what are they but parallels to the favourable or depreciating notices of the reviewers, who play at golf with the publications of the season, even as Altisidora, in her approach to the gates of the infernal regions, saw the devils playing at racket with the new books of Cervantes's days.

Well, every hour has its end. Five o'clock came, and my friend, with his daughters and his handsome young son, who, though fairly buckled to the desk, is every now and then looking over his shoulder at a smart uniform, set seriously about satisfying the corporeal wants of nature; while I, stimulated by a nobler appetite after fame, wished that the touch of a magic wand could, without all the ceremony of picking and choosing, carving and slicing, masticating and swallowing, have transported a *quantum sufficit* of the good things on my friend's hospitable board into the stomachs of those who surrounded it, to be there at leisure converted into chyle, while their thoughts were turned on higher matters. At length all was over. But the young ladies sat still and talked of the music of *The Freischütz*, for nothing else was then thought of; so we discussed the wild hunters' song, and the tame hunters' song, etc. etc., in all which my young friends were quite at home. Luckily for me, all this horning and hooping drew on some allusion to the Seventh Hussars, which gallant regiment, I observe, is a more favourite theme with both Miss Catherine and her brother than with my old friend, who presently looked at his watch, and said something significantly to Mr. James about office hours. The youth got up with the ease of a youngster that would be thought a man of fashion rather than of business, and endeavoured, with some success, to walk out of the room as if the locomotion was entirely voluntary; Miss Catherine and her sisters left us at the same time, and now, thought I, my trial comes on.

Reader, did you ever, in the course of your life, cheat the courts of justice and lawyers by agreeing to refer a dubious and important question to the decision of a mutual friend? If so, you may have remarked the relative change which the arbiter undergoes in your estimation, when raised, though by your own free choice, from an ordinary acquaintance, whose opinions were of as little consequence to you as yours to him, into a superior personage, on whose decision your fate must depend *pro tanto*,

as my friend Mr. Fairscribe would say. His looks assume a mysterious, if not a minatory, expression ; his hat has a loftier air, and his wig, if he wears one, a more formidable buckle.

I felt, accordingly, that my good friend Fairscribe, on the present occasion, had acquired something of a similar increase of consequence. But a week since, he had, in my opinion, been indeed an excellent-meaning man, perfectly competent to everything within his own profession, but immured at the same time among its forms and technicalities, and as incapable of judging of matters of taste as any mighty Goth whatsoever of or belonging to the ancient Senate House of Scotland. But what of that ? I had made him my judge by my own election ; and I have often observed that an idea of declining such a reference on account of his own consciousness of incompetency is, as it perhaps ought to be, the last which occurs to the referee himself. He that has a literary work subjected to his judgment by the author immediately throws his mind into a critical attitude, though the subject be one which he never before thought of. No doubt the author is well qualified to select his own judge, and why should the arbiter whom he has chosen doubt his own talents for condemnation or acquittal, since he has been doubtless picked out by his friend from his indubitable reliance on their competence ? Surely the man who wrote the production is likely to know the person best qualified to judge of it.

Whilst these thoughts crossed my brain, I kept my eyes fixed on my good friend, whose motions appeared unusually tardy to me, while he ordered a bottle of particular claret, decanted it with scrupulous accuracy with his own hand, caused his old domestic to bring a saucer of olives, and chips of toasted bread, and thus, on hospitable thoughts intent, seemed to me to adjourn the discussion which I longed to bring on, yet feared to precipitate.

‘He is dissatisfied,’ thought I, ‘and is ashamed to show it — afraid, doubtless, of hurting my feelings. What had I to do to talk to him about anything save charters and sasines ? Stay, he is going to begin.’

‘We are old fellows now, Mr. Croftangry,’ said my landlord ; ‘scarcely so fit to take a poor quart of claret between us as we would have been in better days to take a pint, in the old Scottish liberal acceptance of the phrase. Maybe you would have liked me to have kept James to help us. But if it is not on a holyday or so, I think it is best he should observe office hours.’

Here the discourse was about to fall. I relieved it by saying, Mr. James was at the happy time of life when he had better things to do than to sit over the bottle. 'I suppose,' said I, 'your son is a reader.'

'Um — yes — James may be called a reader in a sense ; but I doubt there is little solid in his studies — poetry and plays, Mr. Croftangry, all nonsense ; they set his head a-gadding after the army, when he should be minding his business.'

'I suppose, then, that romances do not find much more grace in your eyes than dramatic and poetical compositions ?'

'Deil a bit — deil a bit, Mr. Croftangry, nor historical productions either. There is too much fighting in history, as if men only were brought into this world to send one another out of it. It nourishes false notions of our being, and chief and proper end, Mr. Croftangry.'

Still all this was general, and I became determined to bring our discourse to a focus. 'I am afraid, then, I have done very ill to trouble you with my idle manuscripts, Mr. Fairscribe ; but you must do me the justice to remember that I had nothing better to do than to amuse myself by writing the sheets I put into your hands the other day. I may truly plead —

I left no calling for this idle trade.'

'I cry your mercy, Mr. Croftangry,' said my old friend, suddenly recollecting ; 'yes — yes, I have been very rude ; but I had forgotten entirely that you had taken a spell yourself at that idle man's trade.'

'I suppose,' replied I, 'you, on your side, have been too busy a man to look at my poor *Chronicles* ?'

'No — no,' said my friend, 'I am not so bad as that neither. I have read them bit by bit, just as I could get a moment's time, and I believe I shall very soon get through them.'

'Well, my good friend ?' said I, interrogatively.

And 'Well, Mr. Croftangry,' cried he, 'I really think you have got over the ground very tolerably well. I have noted down here two or three bits of things, which I presume to be errors of the press, otherwise it might be alleged, perhaps, that you did not fully pay that attention to the grammatical rules which one would desire to see rigidly observed.'

I looked at my friend's notes, which, in fact, showed that, in one or two grossly obvious passages, I had left uncorrected such solecisms in grammar.

'Well — well, I own my fault ; but, setting apart these casual

errors, how do you like the matter and the manner of what I have been writing, Mr. Fairscribe ?'

'Why,' said my friend, pausing, with more grave and important hesitation than I thanked him for, 'there is not much to be said against the manner. The style is terse and intelligible, Mr. Croftangry — very intelligible; and that I consider as the first point in everything that is intended to be understood. There are, indeed, here and there some flights and fancies, which I comprehended with difficulty; but I got to your meaning at last. There are people that are like ponies: their judgments cannot go fast, but they go sure.'

'That is a pretty clear proposition, my friend; but then how did you like the meaning when you did get at it? or was that, like some ponies, too difficult to catch, and, when caught, not worth the trouble?'

'I am far from saying that, my dear sir, in respect it would be downright uncivil; but since you ask my opinion, I wish you could have thought about something more appertaining to civil policy than all this bloody work about shooting and dirking, and downright hanging. I am told it was the Germans who first brought in such a practice of choosing their heroes out of the Porteous Roll;¹ but, by my faith, we are like to be upsides with them. The first was, as I am credibly informed, Mr. Scholar, as they call him — a scholar-like piece of work he has made of it, with his robbers and thieves.'

'Schiller,' said I, 'my dear sir — let it be Schiller.'

'Shiller, or what you like,' said Mr. Fairscribe. 'I found the book where I wish I had found a better one, and that is, in Kate's work-basket. I sat down, and, like an old fool, began to read; but there, I grant, you have the better of Shiller, Mr. Croftangry.'

'I should be glad, my dear sir, that you really think I have *approached* that admirable author; even your friendly partiality ought not to talk of my having *excelled* him.'

'But I do say you have excelled him, Mr. Croftangry, in a most material particular. For surely a book of amusement should be something that one can take up and lay down at pleasure; and I can say justly, I was never at the least loss to put aside these sheets of yours when business came in the way. But, faith, this Shiller, sir, does not let you off so easily. I forgot one appointment on particular business, and I wilfully broke through another, that I might stay at home and finish his

¹ List of criminal indictments, so termed in Scotland.

confounded book, which, after all, is about two brothers, the greatest rascals I ever heard of. The one, sir, goes near to murder his own father, and the other — which you would think still stranger — sets about to debauch his own wife.’

‘I find, then, Mr. Fairscribe, that you have no taste for the romance of real life, no pleasure in contemplating those spirit-rousing impulses which force men of fiery passions upon great crimes and great virtues?’

‘Why, as to that, I am not just so sure. But then, to mend the matter,’ continued the critic, ‘you have brought in Highlanders into every story, as if you were going back again, *velis et remis*, into the old days of Jacobitism. I must speak my plain mind, Mr. Croftangry. I cannot tell what innovations in kirk and state may be now proposed, but our fathers were friends to both, as they were settled at the glorious Revolution, and liked a tartan plaid as little as they did a white surplice. I wish to Heaven all this tartan fever bode well to the Protestant succession and the Kirk of Scotland.’

‘Both too well settled, I hope, in the minds of the subject,’ said I, ‘to be affected by old remembrances, on which we look back as on the portraits of our ancestors, without recollecting, while we gaze on them, any of the feuds by which the originals were animated while alive. But most happy should I be to light upon any topic to supply the place of the Highlands, Mr. Fairscribe. I have been just reflecting that the theme is becoming a little exhausted, and your experience may perhaps supply —’

‘Ha — ha — ha, *my* experience supply!’ interrupted Mr. Fairscribe, with a laugh of derision. ‘Why, you might as well ask my son James’s experience to supply a case about thirlage. No — no, my good friend, I have lived by the law and in the law all my life; and when you seek the impulses that make soldiers desert and shoot their sergeants and corporals, and Highland drovers dirk English graziers, to prove themselves men of fiery passions, it is not to a man like me you should come. I could tell you some tricks of my own trade, perhaps, and a queer story or two of estates that have been lost and recovered. But, to tell you the truth, I think you might do with your Muse of Fiction, as you call her, as many an honest man does with his own sons in flesh and blood.’

‘And how is that, my dear sir?’

‘Send her to India, to be sure. That is the true place for

a Scot to thrive in; and if you carry your story fifty years back, as there is nothing to hinder you, you will find as much shooting and stabbing there as ever was in the wild Highlands. If you want rogues, as they are so much in fashion with you, you have that gallant caste of adventurers who laid down their consciences at the Cape of Good Hope as they went out to India, and forgot to take them up again when they returned. Then, for great exploits, you have in the old history of India, before Europeans were numerous there, the most wonderful deeds, done by the least possible means, that perhaps the annals of the world can afford.'

'I know it,' said I, kindling at the ideas his speech inspired. 'I remember, in the delightful pages of Orme, the interest which mingles in his narratives, from the very small number of English which are engaged. Each officer of a regiment becomes known to you by name—nay, the non-commissioned officers and privates acquire an individual share of interest. They are distinguished among the natives like the Spaniards among the Mexicans. What do I say? They are like Homer's demigods among the warring mortals. Men like Clive and Cailliaud influenced great events like Jove himself. Inferior officers are like Mars or Neptune, and the sergeants and corporals might well pass for demigods. Then the various religious costumes, habits, and manners of the people of Hindostan—the patient Hindoo, the warlike Rajahpoot, the haughty Moslemah, the savage and vindictive Malay. Glorious and unbounded subjects! The only objection is, that I have never been there, and know nothing at all about them.'

'Nonsense, my good friend. You will tell us about them all the better that you know nothing of what you are saying. And come, we'll finish the bottle, and when Katie—her sisters go to the assembly—has given us tea, she will tell you the outline of the story of poor Menie Gray, whose picture you will see in the drawing-room, a distant relation of my father's, who had, however, a handsome part of cousin Menie's succession. There are none living that can be hurt by the story now, though it was thought best to smother it up at the time, as indeed even the whispers about it led poor cousin Menie to live very retired. I mind her well when a child. There was something very gentle, but rather tiresome, about poor cousin Menie.'

When we came into the drawing-room, my friend pointed

to a picture which I had before noticed, without, however, its having attracted more than a passing look; now I regarded it with more attention. It was one of those portraits of the middle of the 18th century, in which artists endeavoured to conquer the stiffness of hoops and brocades, by throwing a fancy drapery around the figure, with loose folds like a mantle or dressing-gown, the stays, however, being retained, and the bosom displayed in a manner which shows that our mothers, like their daughters, were as liberal of their charms as the nature of the dress might permit. To this the well-known style of the period the features and form of the individual added, at first sight, little interest. It represented a handsome woman of about thirty, her hair wound simply about her head, her features regular, and her complexion fair. But on looking more closely, especially after having had a hint that the original had been the heroine of a tale, I could observe a melancholy sweetness in the countenance, that seemed to speak of woes endured and injuries sustained with that resignation which women can and do sometimes display under the insults and ingratitude of those on whom they have bestowed their affections.

'Yes, she was an excellent and an ill-used woman,' said Mr. Fairscribe, his eye fixed like mine on the picture. 'She left our family not less, I daresay, than five thousand pounds, and I believe she died worth four times that sum; but it was divided among the nearest of kin, which was all fair.'

'But her history, Mr. Fairscribe,' said I; 'to judge from her look, it must have been a melancholy one.'

'You may say that, Mr. Croftangry. Melancholy enough, and extraordinary enough too. But,' added he, swallowing in haste a cup of the tea which was presented to him, 'I must away to my business: we cannot be gowffing all the morning, and telling old stories all the afternoon. Katie knows all the outs and the ins of cousin Menie's adventures as well as I do, and when she has given you the particulars, then I am at your service, to condescend more articulately upon dates or particulars.'

Well, here was I, a gay old bachelor, left to hear a love tale from my young friend Katie Fairscribe, who, when she is not surrounded by a bevy of gallants, at which time, to my thinking, she shows less to advantage, is as pretty, well-behaved, and unaffected a girl as you see tripping the new walks of Princes Street or Heriot Row. Old bachelorship so

decided as mine has its privileges in such a *tête-à-tête*, providing you are, or can seem for the time, perfectly good-humoured and attentive, and do not ape the manners of your younger years, in attempting which you will only make yourself ridiculous. I don't pretend to be so indifferent to the company of a pretty young woman as was desired by the poet, who wished to sit beside his mistress —

As unconcern'd, as when
Her infant beauty could beget
Nor happiness nor pain.

On the contrary, I can look on beauty and innocence as something of which I know and esteem the value, without the desire or hope to make them my own. A young lady can afford to talk with an old stager like me without either artifice or affectation; and we may maintain a species of friendship, the more tender, perhaps, because we are of different sexes, yet with which that distinction has very little to do.

Now, I hear my wisest and most critical neighbour remark, 'Mr. Croftangry is in the way of doing a foolish thing. He is well to pass — Old Fairscribe knows to a penny what he is worth, and Miss Katie, with all her airs, may like the old brass that buys the new pan. I thought Mr. Croftangry was looking very cadgy when he came in to play a rubber with us last night. Poor gentleman, I am sure I should be sorry to see him make a fool of himself.'

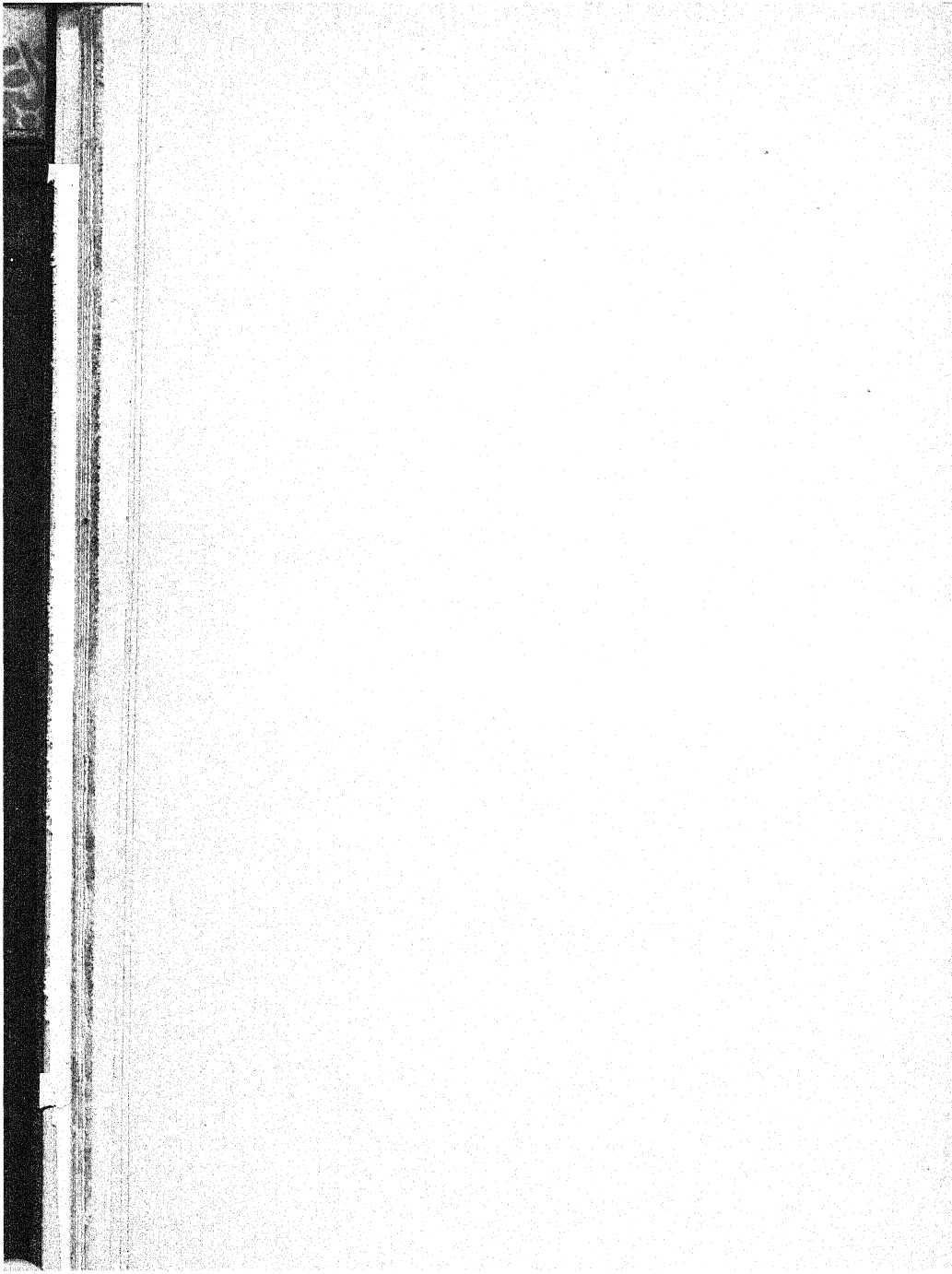
Spare your compassion, dear madam, there is not the least danger. The *beaux yeux de ma casette* are not brilliant enough to make amends for the spectacles which must supply the dimness of my own. I am a little deaf too, as you know to your sorrow when we are partners; and if I could get a nymph to marry me with all these imperfections, who the deuce would marry Janet MacEvoy? and from Janet MacEvoy Chrystal Croftangry will not part.

Miss Katie Fairscribe gave me the tale of Menie Gray with much taste and simplicity, not attempting to suppress the feelings, whether of grief or resentment, which justly and naturally arose from the circumstances of the tale. Her father afterwards confirmed the principal outlines of the story, and furnished me with some additional circumstances, which Miss Katie had suppressed or forgotten. Indeed, I have learned on this occasion what old Lintot meant when he told Pope that he used to propitiate the critics of importance, when he had a work in the press, by now and then letting them see a sheet

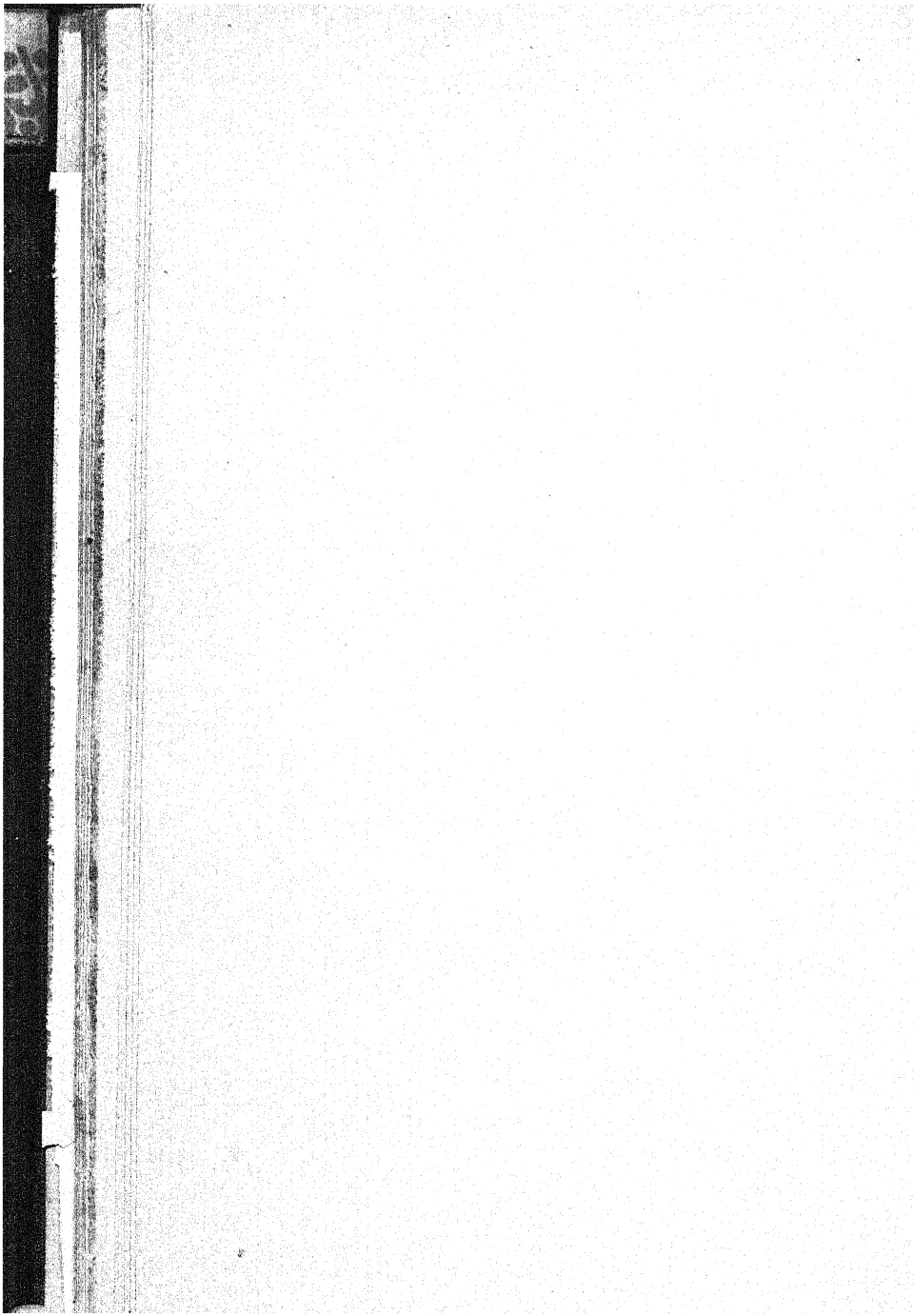
of the blotted proof, or a few leaves of the original manuscript. Our mystery of authorship hath something about it so fascinating, that if you admit any one, however little he may previously have been disposed to such studies, into your confidence, you will find that he considers himself as a party interested, and, if success follows, will think himself entitled to no inconsiderable share of the praise.

The reader has seen that no one could have been naturally less interested than was my excellent friend Fairscribe in my lucubrations, when I first consulted him on the subject; but since he has contributed a subject to the work, he has become a most zealous coadjutor; and, half-ashamed, I believe, yet half-proud, of the literary stock-company in which he has got a share, he never meets me without jogging my elbow, and dropping some mysterious hints, as, 'I am saying, when will you give us any more of yon?' or, 'Yon's not a bad narrative—I like yon.'

Pray Heaven the reader may be of his opinion.



THE SURGEON'S DAUGHTER



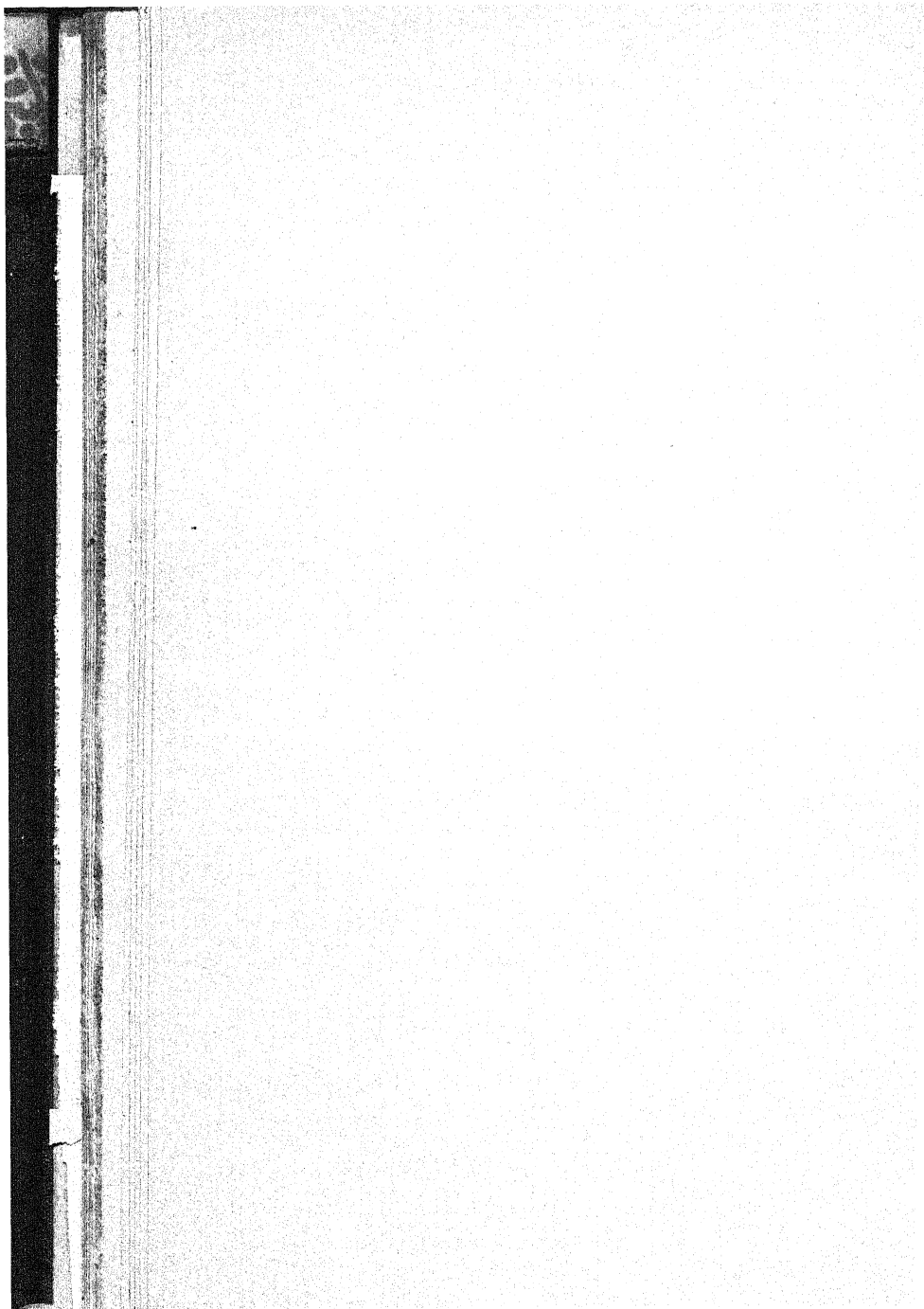
INTRODUCTION

The tale of *The Surgeon's Daughter* formed part of the First Series of *Chronicles of the Canongate*, published in 1827; but has been separated from the stories of *The Highland Widow*, etc., which it originally accompanied, and deferred to the close of this collection, for reasons which printers and publishers will understand, and which would hardly interest the general reader.

The Author has nothing to say now in reference to this little novel, but that the principal incident on which it turns was narrated to him one morning at breakfast by his worthy friend, Mr. Train, of Castle Douglas, in Galloway, whose kind assistance he has so often had occasion to acknowledge in the course of these prefaces; and that the military friend who is alluded to as having furnished him with some information as to Eastern matters was Colonel James Ferguson of Huntly Burn, one of the sons of the venerable historian and philosopher of that name, which name he took the liberty of concealing under its Gaelic form of MacErries.

W. S.

ABBOTSFORD, Sept. 1831.



THE SURGEON'S DAUGHTER

CHAPTER I

When fainting Nature call'd for aid,
And hovering Death prepared the blow,
His vigorous remedy display'd
The power of Art without the show.
In Misery's darkest caverns known,
His useful care was ever nigh,
Where hopeless Anguish pour'd his groan,
And lonely Want retired to die ;
No summons mock'd by cold delay,
No petty gains disclaim'd by pride,
The modest wants of every day
The toil of every day supplied.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

THE exquisitely beautiful portrait which the Rambler has painted of his friend Levett well describes Gideon Gray and many other village doctors, from whom Scotland reaps more benefit, and to whom she is perhaps more ungrateful, than to any other class of men, excepting her schoolmasters.

Such a rural man of medicine is usually the inhabitant of some petty borough or village, which forms the central point of his practice. But, besides attending to such cases as the village may afford, he is day and night at the service of every one who may command his assistance within a circle of forty miles in diameter, untraversed by roads in many directions, and including moors, mountains, rivers, and lakes. For late and dangerous journeys through an inaccessible country, for services of the most essential kind, rendered at the expense, or risk at least, of his own health and life, the Scottish village doctor receives at best a very moderate recompense, often one which is totally inadequate, and very frequently none whatever. He has none of the ample resources proper to the

brothers of the profession in an English town. The burgesses of a Scottish borough are rendered, by their limited means of luxury, inaccessible to gout, surfeits, and all the comfortable chronic diseases which are attendant on wealth and indolence. Four years or so of abstemiousness enable them to stand an election dinner; and there is no hope of broken heads among a score or two of quiet electors, who settle the business over a table. There the mothers of the state never make a point of pouring, in the course of every revolving year, a certain quantity of doctor's stuff through the bowels of their beloved children. Every old woman from the 'townhead to the town-fit' can prescribe a dose of salts or spread a plaster; and it is only when a fever or a palsy renders matters serious that the assistance of the doctor is invoked by his neighbours in the borough.

But still the man of science cannot complain of inactivity or want of practice. If he does not find patients at his door, he seeks them through a wide circle. Like the ghostly lover of Bürger's *Leonora*, he mounts at midnight, and traverses in darkness paths which, to those less accustomed to them, seem formidable in daylight, through straits where the slightest aberration would plunge him into a morass, or throw him over a precipice, on to cabins which his horse might ride over without knowing they lay in his way, unless he happened to fall through the roofs. When he arrives at such a stately termination of his journey, where his services are required either to bring a wretch into the world or prevent one from leaving it, the scene of misery is often such that, far from touching the hard-saved shillings which are gratefully offered to him, he bestows his medicines as well as his attendance — for charity. I have heard the celebrated traveller, Mungo Park, who had experienced both courses of life, rather give the preference to travelling as a discoverer in Africa than to wandering by night and day the wilds of his native land in the capacity of a country medical practitioner. He mentioned having once upon a time rode forty miles, sat up all night, and successfully assisted a woman under influence of the primitive curse, for which his sole remuneration was a roasted potato and a draught of buttermilk. But his was not the heart which grudged the labour that relieved human misery. In short, there is no creature in Scotland that works harder and is more poorly requited than the country doctor, unless perhaps it may be his horse. Yet the horse is, and indeed must be, hardy, active, and indefatigable,

in spite of a rough coat and indifferent condition ; and so you will often find in his master, under an unpromising and blunt exterior, professional skill and enthusiasm, intelligence, humanity, courage, and science.

Mr. Gideon Gray, surgeon in the village of Middlemas, situated in one of the midland counties of Scotland, led the rough, active, and ill-rewarded course of life which we have endeavoured to describe. He was a man between forty and fifty, devoted to his profession, and of such reputation in the medical world that he had been more than once, as opportunities occurred, advised to exchange Middlemas and its meagre circle of practice for some of the larger towns in Scotland, or for Edinburgh itself. This advice he had always declined. He was a plain, blunt man, who did not love restraint, and was unwilling to subject himself to that which was exacted in polite society. He had not himself found out, nor had any friend hinted to him, that a slight touch of the cynic, in manner and habits, gives the physician, to the common eye, an air of authority which greatly tends to enlarge his reputation. Mr. Gray, or, as the country people called him, Doctor Gray (he might hold the title by diploma for what I know, though he only claimed the rank of Master of Arts), had few wants, and these were amply supplied by a professional income which generally approached two hundred pounds a-year, for which, upon an average, he travelled about five thousand miles on horseback in the course of the twelve months. Nay, so liberally did this revenue support himself and his ponies, called Pestle and Mortar, which he exercised alternately, that he took a damsel to share it, Jean Watson, namely, the cherry-cheeked daughter of an honest farmer, who, being herself one of twelve children, who had been brought up on an income of fourscore pounds a-year, never thought there could be poverty in more than double the sum ; and looked on Gray, though now termed by irreverent youth the Old Doctor, as a very advantageous match. For several years they had no children, and it seemed as if Doctor Gray, who had so often assisted the efforts of the goddess Lucina, was never to invoke her in his own behalf. Yet his domestic roof was, on a remarkable occasion, decreed to be the scene where the goddess's art was required.

Late of an autumn evening three old women might be observed plying their aged limbs through the single street of the village at Middlemas towards the honoured door, which,

fenced off from the vulgar causeway, was defended by a broken paling, inclosing two slips of ground, half arable, half overrun with an abortive attempt at shrubbery. The door itself was blazoned with the name of Gideon Gray, M.A., Surgeon, etc. etc. Some of the idle young fellows who had been a minute or two before loitering at the other end of the street before the door of the ale-house (for the pretended inn deserved no better name) now accompanied the old dames with shouts of laughter, excited by their unwonted agility; and with bets on the winner, as loudly expressed as if they had been laid at the starting-post of Middlemas races. 'Half-a-mutchkin on Luckie Simson!' 'Auld Peg Tamson against the field!' 'Mair speed, Alison Jaup, ye'll tak the wind out of them yet!' 'Canny against the hill, lasses, or we may have a brusten auld carline amang ye!' These, and a thousand such gibes, rent the air, without being noticed, or even heard, by the anxious racers, whose object of contention seemed to be which should first reach the doctor's door.

'Guide us, doctor, what can be the matter now?' said Mrs. Gray, whose character was that of a good-natured simpleton; 'here's Peg Tamson, Jean Simson, and Alison Jaup running a race on the Hie Street of the burgh!'

The doctor, who had but the moment before hung his wet greatcoat before the fire (for he was just dismounted from a long journey), hastened downstairs, auguring some new occasion for his services, and happy that, from the character of the messengers, it was likely to be within burgh, and not landward.

He had just reached the door as Luckie Simson, one of the racers, arrived in the little area before it. She had got the start and kept it, but at the expense for the time of her power of utterance; for, when she came in presence of the doctor, she stood blowing like a grampus, her loose toy flying back from her face, making the most violent efforts to speak, but without the power of uttering a single intelligible word.

Peg Thomson whipped in before her. 'The leddy, sir — the leddy ——'

'Instant help — instant help ——' screeched, rather than uttered, Alison Jaup; while Luckie Simson, who had certainly won the race, found words to claim the prize which had set them all in motion. 'And I hope, sir, you will recommend me to be the sick-nurse; I was here to bring you the tidings lang before ony o' thae lazy queans'

Loud were the counter protestations of the two competitors, and loud the laugh of the idle 'loons' who listened at a little distance.

'Hold your tongue, ye flyting fools,' said the doctor; 'and you, ye idle rascals, if I come out among you ——' So saying, he smacked his long-lashed whip with great emphasis, producing much the effect of the celebrated *Quos ego* of Neptune, in the First *Aeneid*. 'And now,' said the doctor, 'where or who is this lady?'

The question was scarce necessary; for a plain carriage, with four horses, came at a foot's-pace towards the door of the doctor's house, and the old women, now more at their ease, gave the doctor to understand that the gentleman thought the accommodation of the Swan Inn totally unfit for his lady's rank and condition, and had, by their advice (each claiming the merit of the suggestion), brought her here, to experience the hospitality of the 'west room' — a spare apartment in which Doctor Gray occasionally accommodated such patients as he desired to keep for a space of time under his own eye.

There were two persons only in the vehicle. The one, a gentleman in a riding-dress, sprung out, and having received from the doctor an assurance that the lady would receive tolerable accommodation in his house, he lent assistance to his companion to leave the carriage, and with great apparent satisfaction saw her safely deposited in a decent sleeping-apartment, and under the respectable charge of the doctor and his lady, who assured him once more of every species of attention. To bind their promise more firmly, the stranger slipped a purse of twenty guineas (for this story chanced in the golden age) into the hand of the doctor, as an earnest of the most liberal recompense, and requested he would spare no expense in providing all that was necessary or desirable for a person in the lady's condition, and for the helpless being to whom she might immediately be expected to give birth. He then said he would retire to the inn, where he begged a message might instantly acquaint him with the expected change in the lady's situation.

'She is of rank,' he said, 'and a foreigner; let no expense be spared. We designed to have reached Edinburgh, but were forced to turn off the road by an accident.' Once more he said, 'Let no expense be spared, and manage that she may travel as soon as possible.'

'That,' said the doctor, 'is past my control. Nature must

not be hurried, and she avenges herself of every attempt to do so.'

'But art,' said the stranger, 'can do much,' and he proffered a second purse, which seemed as heavy as the first.

'Art,' said the doctor, 'may be recompensed, but cannot be purchased. You have already paid me more than enough to take the utmost care I can of your lady; should I accept more money, it could only be for promising, by implication at least, what is beyond my power to perform. Every possible care shall be taken of your lady, and that affords the best chance of her being speedily able to travel. Now, go you to the inn, sir, for I may be instantly wanted, and we have not yet provided either an attendant for the lady or a nurse for the child; but both shall be presently done.'

'Yet a moment, doctor — what languages do you understand?'

'Latin and French I can speak indifferently, and so as to be understood; and I read a little Italian.'

'But no Portuguese or Spanish?' continued the stranger.

'No, sir.'

'That is unlucky. But you may make her understand you by means of French. Take notice, you are to comply with her request in everything; if you want means to do so, you may apply to me.'

'May I ask, sir, by what name the lady is to be ——'

'It is totally indifferent,' said the stranger, interrupting the question; 'you shall know it at more leisure.'

So saying, he threw his ample cloak about him, turning himself half round to assist the operation, with an air which the doctor would have found it difficult to imitate, and walked down the street to the little inn. Here he paid and dismissed the postilions, and shut himself up in an apartment, ordering no one to be admitted till the doctor should call.

The doctor, when he returned to his patient's apartment, found his wife in great surprise, which, as is usual with persons of her character, was not unmixed with fear and anxiety.

'She cannot speak a word like a Christian being,' said Mrs. Gray.

'I know it,' said the doctor.

'But she threeps to keep on a black fause-face, and skirls if we offer to take it away.'

'Well, then, let her wear it. What harm will it do?'

'Harm, doctor! Was ever honest woman brought to bed with a fause-face on?'

'Seldom, perhaps. But, Jean, my dear, those who are not quite honest must be brought to bed all the same as those who are, and we are not to endanger the poor thing's life by contradicting her whims at present.'

Approaching the sick woman's bed, he observed that she indeed wore a thin silk mask, of the kind which do such uncommon service in the Elder Comedy; such as women of rank still wore in travelling, but certainly never in the situation of this poor lady. It would seem she had sustained impertunity on the subject, for when she saw the doctor she put her hand to her face, as if she was afraid he would insist on pulling off the vizard. He hastened to say, in tolerable French, that her will should be a law to them in every respect, and that she was at perfect liberty to wear the mask till it was her pleasure to lay it aside. She understood him; for she replied, by a very imperfect attempt, in the same language, to express her gratitude for the permission, as she seemed to regard it, of retaining her disguise.

The doctor proceeded to other arrangements; and, for the satisfaction of those readers who may love minute information, we record that Luckie Simson, the first in the race, carried as a prize the situation of sick-nurse beside the delicate patient; that Peg Thomson was permitted the privilege of recommending her good-daughter, Bet Jamieson, to be wet-nurse; and an *oe*, or grandchild, of Luckie Jaup was hired to assist in the increased drudgery of the family; the doctor thus, like a practised minister, dividing among his trusty adherents such good things as fortune placed at his disposal.

About one in the morning the doctor made his appearance at the Swan Inn, and acquainted the stranger gentleman that he wished him joy of being the father of a healthy boy, and that the mother was, in the usual phrase, as well as could be expected.

The stranger heard the news with seeming satisfaction, and then exclaimed, 'He must be christened, doctor—he must be christened instantly.'

'There can be no hurry for that,' said the doctor.

'We think otherwise,' said the stranger, cutting his argument short. 'I am a Catholic, doctor, and as I may be obliged to leave this place before the lady is able to travel, I desire to see my child received into the pale of the church. There is, I understand, a Catholic priest in this wretched place?'

'There is a Catholic gentleman, sir, Mr. Goodriche, who is reported to be in orders.'

'I commend your caution, doctor,' said the stranger: 'it is dangerous to be too positive on any subject. I will bring that same Mr. Goodriche to your house to-morrow.'

Gray hesitated for a moment. 'I am a Presbyterian Protestant, sir,' he said, 'a friend to the constitution as established in church and state, as I have a good right, having drawn his Majesty's pay, God bless him, for four years, as surgeon's mate in the Cameronian regiment, as my regimental Bible and commission can testify. But although I be bound especially to abhor all trafficking or trinketing with Papists, yet I will not stand in the way of a tender conscience. Sir, you may call with Mr. Goodriche when you please at my house; and undoubtedly, you being, as I suppose, the father of the child, you will arrange matters as you please; only, I do not desire to be thought an abettor or countenancer of any part of the Popish ritual.'

'Enough, sir,' said the stranger, haughtily, 'we understand each other.'

The next day he appeared at the doctor's house with Mr. Goodriche, and two persons understood to belong to that reverend gentleman's communion. The party were shut up in an apartment with the infant, and it may be presumed that the solemnity of baptism was administered to the unconscious being thus strangely launched upon the world. When the priest and witnesses had retired, the strange gentleman informed Mr. Gray that, as the lady had been pronounced unfit for travelling for several days, he was himself about to leave the neighbourhood, but would return thither in the space of ten days, when he hoped to find his companion able to leave it.

'And by what name are we to call the child and mother?'

'The infant's name is Richard.'

'But it must have some surname; so must the lady — she cannot reside in my house, yet be without a name.'

'Call them by the name of your town here — Middlemas, I think it is?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Well, Mrs. Middlemas is the name of the mother, and Richard Middlemas of the child — and I am Matthew Middlemas, at your service. This,' he continued, 'will provide Mrs. Middlemas in everything she may wish to possess — or assist her in case of accidents.' With that he placed £100 in Mr. Gray's hand, who rather scrupled receiving it, saying, 'He supposed the lady was qualified to be her own purse-bearer.'

'The worst in the world, I assure you, doctor,' replied the stranger. 'If she wished to change that piece of paper, she would scarce know how many guineas she should receive for it. No, Mr. Gray, I assure you you will find Mrs. Middleton — Middlemas — what did I call her? — as ignorant of the affairs of this world as any one you have met with in your practice. So you will please to be her treasurer and administrator for the time, as for a patient that is incapable to look after her own affairs.'

This was spoke, as it struck Dr. Gray, in rather a haughty and supercilious manner. The words intimated nothing in themselves more than the same desire of preserving incognito which might be gathered from all the rest of the stranger's conduct; but the manner seemed to say, 'I am not a person to be questioned by any one. What I say must be received without comment, how little soever you may believe or understand it.' It strengthened Gray in his opinion, that he had before him a case either of seduction or of private marriage, betwixt persons of the very highest rank; and the whole bearing, both of the lady and the gentleman, confirmed his suspicions. It was not in his nature to be troublesome or inquisitive, but he could not fail to see that the lady wore no marriage-ring; and her deep sorrow and perpetual tremor seemed to indicate an unhappy creature who had lost the protection of parents without acquiring a legitimate right to that of a husband. He was therefore somewhat anxious when Mr. Middlemas, after a private conference of some length with the lady, bade him farewell. It is true, he assured him of his return within ten days, being the very shortest space which Gray could be prevailed upon to assign for any prospect of the lady being moved with safety.

'I trust in Heaven that he will return,' said Gray to himself, 'but there is too much mystery about all this for the matter being a plain and well-meaning transaction. If he intends to treat this poor thing as many a poor girl has been used before, I hope that my house will not be the scene in which he chooses to desert her. The leaving the money has somewhat a suspicious aspect, and looks as if my friend were in the act of making some compromise with his conscience. Well, I must hope the best. Meantime my path plainly is to do what I can for the poor lady's benefit.'

Mr. Gray visited his patient shortly after Mr. Middlemas's departure — as soon, indeed, as he could be admitted. He

found her in violent agitation. Gray's experience dictated the best mode of relief and tranquillity. He caused her infant to be brought to her. She wept over it for a long time, and the violence of her agitation subsided under the influence of parental feelings, which, from her appearance of extreme youth, she must have experienced for the first time.

The observant physician could, after this paroxysm, remark that his patient's mind was chiefly occupied in computing the passage of the time, and anticipating the period when the return of her husband — if husband he was — might be expected. She consulted almanacks, inquired concerning distances, though so cautiously as to make it evident she desired to give no indication of the direction of her companion's journey, and repeatedly compared her watch with those of others, exercising, it was evident, all that delusive species of mental arithmetic by which mortals attempt to accelerate the passage of time while they calculate his progress. At other times she wept anew over her child, which was by all judges pronounced as goodly an infant as needed to be seen; and Gray sometimes observed that she murmured sentences to the unconscious infant, not only the words, but the very sound and accents, of which were strange to him, and which, in particular, he knew not to be Portuguese.

Mr. Goodriche, the Catholic priest, demanded access to her upon one occasion. She at first declined his visit, but afterwards received it, under the idea, perhaps, that he might have news from Mr. Middlemas, as he called himself. The interview was a very short one, and the priest left the lady's apartment in displeasure, which his prudence could scarce disguise from Mr. Gray. He never returned, although the lady's condition would have made his attentions and consolations necessary, had she been a member of the Catholic Church.

Our doctor began at length to suspect his fair guest was a Jewess, who had yielded up her person and affections to one of a different religion; and the peculiar style of her beautiful countenance went to enforce this opinion. The circumstance made no difference to Gray, who saw only her distress and desolation, and endeavoured to remedy both to the utmost of his power. He was, however, desirous to conceal it from his wife and the others around the sick person, whose prudence and liberality of thinking might be more justly doubted. He therefore so regulated her diet that she could not be either offended or brought under suspicion by any of the articles for-

bidden by the Mosaic law being presented to her. In other respects than what concerned her health or convenience, he had but little intercourse with her.

The space passed within which the stranger's return to the borough had been so anxiously expected by his female companion. The disappointment occasioned by his non-arrival was manifested in the convalescent by inquietude, which was at first mingled with peevishness, and afterwards with doubt and fear. When two or three days had passed without message or letter of any kind, Gray himself became anxious, both on his own account and the poor lady's, lest the stranger should have actually entertained the idea of deserting this defenceless and probably injured woman. He longed to have some communication with her, which might enable him to judge what inquiries could be made, or what else was most fitting to be done. But so imperfect was the poor young woman's knowledge of the French language, and perhaps so unwilling she herself to throw any light on her situation, that every attempt of this kind proved abortive. When Gray asked questions concerning any subject which appeared to approach to explanation, he observed she usually answered him by shaking her head, in token of not understanding what he said; at other times by silence and with tears, and sometimes referring him to *Monsieur*.

For *Monsieur's* arrival, then, Gray began to become very impatient, as that which alone could put an end to a disagreeable species of mystery, which the good company of the borough began now to make the principal subject of their gossip; some blaming Gray for taking foreign 'landloupers'¹ into his house, on the subject of whose morals the most serious doubts might be entertained; others envying the 'bonny hand' the doctor was like to make of it, by having disposal of the wealthy stranger's travelling funds—a circumstance which could not be well concealed from the public, when the honest man's expenditure for trifling articles of luxury came far to exceed its ordinary bounds.

The conscious probity of the honest doctor enabled him to despise this sort of tittle-tattle, though the secret knowledge of its existence could not be agreeable to him. He went his usual rounds with his usual perseverance, and waited with patience until time should throw light on the subject and history of his lodger. It was now the fourth week after her confinement, and the recovery of the stranger might be considered as perfect, when Gray, returning from one of his ten-

¹ Strollers.

mile visits, saw a post-chaise and four horses at the door. 'This man has returned,' he said, 'and my suspicions have done him less than justice.' With that he spurred his horse, a signal which the trusty steed obeyed the more readily as its progress was in the direction of the stable door. But when, dismounting, the doctor hurried into his own house, it seemed to him that the departure as well as the arrival of this distressed lady was destined to bring confusion to his peaceful dwelling. Several idlers had assembled about his door, and two or three had impudently thrust themselves forward almost into the passage to listen to a confused altercation which was heard from within.

The doctor hastened forward, the foremost of the intruders retreating in confusion on his approach, while he caught the tones of his wife's voice, raised to a pitch which he knew by experience boded no good; for Mrs. Gray, good-humoured and tractable in general, could sometimes perform the high part in a matrimonial duet. Having much more confidence in his wife's good intentions than her prudence, he lost no time in pushing into the parlour, to take the matter into his own hands. Here he found his helpmate at the head of the whole militia of the sick lady's apartment — that is, wet-nurse, and sick-nurse, and girl of all work — engaged in violent dispute with two strangers. The one was a dark-featured elderly man, with an eye of much sharpness and severity of expression, which now seemed partly quenched by a mixture of grief and mortification. The other, who appeared actively sustaining the dispute with Mrs. Gray, was a stout, bold-looking, hard-faced person, armed with pistols, of which he made rather an unnecessary and ostentatious display.

'Here is my husband, sir,' said Mrs. Gray, in a tone of triumph, for she had the grace to believe the doctor one of the greatest men living — 'here is the doctor; let us see what you will say now.'

'Why, just what I said before, ma'am,' answered the man, 'which is, that my warrant must be obeyed. It is regular, ma'am — regular.'

So saying, he struck the forefinger of his right hand against a paper which he held towards Mrs. Gray with his left.

'Address yourself to me, if you please, sir,' said the doctor, seeing that he ought to lose no time in removing the cause into the proper court. 'I am the master of this house, sir, and I wish to know the cause of this visit.'

'My business is soon told,' said the man. 'I am a king's messenger, and this lady has treated me as if I was a baron-bailie's officer.'

'That is not the question, sir,' replied the doctor. 'If you are a king's messenger, where is your warrant, and what do you propose to do here?' At the same time he whispered the little wench to call Mr. Lawford, the town-clerk, to come thither as fast as he possibly could. 'The good-daughter of Peg Thomson started off with an activity worthy of her mother-in-law.'

'There is my warrant,' said the official, 'and you may satisfy yourself.'

'The shameless loon dare not tell the doctor his errand,' said Mrs. Gray, exultingly.

'A bonny errand it is,' said old Luckie Simson, 'to carry away a lying-in woman, as a gled¹ would do a clocking-hen.'

'A woman no a month delivered,' echoed the nurse Jamieson.

'Twenty-four days eight hours and seven minutes to a second,' said Mrs. Gray.

The doctor, having looked over the warrant, which was regular, began to be afraid that the females of his family, in their zeal for defending the character of their sex, might be stirred up into some sudden fit of mutiny, and therefore commanded them to be silent.

'This,' he said, 'is a warrant for arresting the bodies of Richard Tresham and of Zilia de Monçada, on account of high treason. Sir, I have served his Majesty, and this is not a house in which traitors are harboured. I know nothing of any of these two persons, nor have I ever heard even their names.'

'But the lady whom you have received into your family,' said the messenger, 'is Zilia de Monçada, and here stands her father, Matthias de Monçada, who will make oath to it.'

'If this be true,' said Mr. Gray, looking towards the alleged officer, 'you have taken a singular duty on you. It is neither my habit to deny my own actions nor to oppose the laws of the land. There is a lady in this house slowly recovering from confinement, having become under this roof the mother of a healthy child. If she be the person described in this warrant, and this gentleman's daughter, I must surrender her to the laws of the country.'

Here the Esculapian militia were once more in motion.

'Surrender, Doctor Gray! It's a shame to hear you speak,

¹ Or kite.

and you that lives by women and weans, abune your other means!' so exclaimed his fair better part.

'I wonder to hear the doctor!' said the younger nurse; 'there's no a wife in the town would believe it o' him.'

'I aye thought the doctor was a man till this moment,' said Luckie Simson; 'but I believe him now to be an auld wife, little baulder than mysell; and I dinna wonder now that poor Mrs. Gray——'

'Hold your peace, you foolish woman,' said the doctor. 'Do you think this business is not bad enough already, that you are making it worse with your senseless claver?' Gentlemen, this is a very sad case. Here is a warrant for a high crime against a poor creature who is little fit to be moved from one house to another, much more dragged to a prison. I tell you plainly, that I think the execution of this arrest may cause her death. It is your business, sir, if you be really her father, to consider what you can do to soften this matter rather than drive it on.'

'Better death than dishonour,' replied the stern-looking old man, with a voice as harsh as his aspect; 'and you, messenger,' he continued, 'look what you do, and execute the warrant at your peril.'

'You hear,' said the man, appealing to the doctor himself, 'I must have immediate access to the lady.'

'In a lucky time,' said Mr. Gray, 'here comes the town-clerk. You are very welcome, Mr. Lawford. Your opinion here is much wanted as a man of law, as well as of sense and humanity. I was never more glad to see you in all my life.'

He then rapidly stated the case; and the messenger, understanding the new-comer to be a man of some authority, again exhibited his warrant.

'This is a very sufficient and valid warrant, Dr. Gray,' replied the man of law. 'Nevertheless, if you are disposed to make oath that instant removal would be unfavourable to the lady's health, unquestionably she must remain here, suitably guarded.'

'It is not so much the mere act of locomotion which I am afraid of,' said the surgeon; 'but I am free to depone, on soul and conscience, that the shame and fear of her father's anger, and the sense of the affront of such an arrest, with terror for its consequences, may occasion violent and dangerous illness—even death itself.'

'The father must see the daughter, though they may have

¹ Tattling.

quarrelled,' said Mr. Lawford; 'the officer of justice must execute his warrant, though it should frighten the criminal to death; these evils are only contingent, not direct and immediate consequences. You must give up the lady, Mr. Gray, though your hesitation is very natural.'

'At least, Mr. Lawford, I ought to be certain that the person in my house is the party they search for.'

'Admit me to her apartment,' replied the man whom the messenger termed Monçada.

The messenger, whom the presence of Lawford had made something more placid, began to become impudent once more. He hoped, he said, by means of his female prisoner, to acquire the information necessary to apprehend the more guilty person. If more delays were thrown in his way, that information might come too late, and he would make all who were accessory to such delay responsible for the consequences.

'And I,' said Mr. Gray, 'though I were to be brought to the gallows for it, protest that this course may be the murder of my patient. Can bail not be taken, Mr. Lawford?'

'Not in cases of high treason,' said the official person; and then continued in a confidential tone, 'Come, Mr. Gray, we all know you to be a person well affected to our royal sovereign King George and the Government; but you must not push this too far, lest you bring yourself into trouble, which everybody in Middlemas would be sorry for. The forty-five has not been so far gone by but we can remember enough of warrants of high treason — ay, and ladies of quality committed upon such charges. But they were all favourably dealt with — Lady Ogilvy, Lady MacIntosh, Flora Macdonald, and all. No doubt this gentleman knows what he is doing, and has assurances of the young lady's safety. So you must just jouk and let the jaw gae by, as we say.'

'Follow me, then, gentlemen,' said Gideon, 'and you shall see the young lady'; and then, his strong features working with emotion at anticipation of the distress which he was about to inflict, he led the way up the small staircase, and, opening the door, said to Monçada, who had followed him, 'This is your daughter's only place of refuge, in which I am, alas! too weak to be her protector. Enter, sir, if your conscience will permit you.'

The stranger turned on him a scowl, into which it seemed as if he would willingly have thrown the power of the fabled basilisk. Then stepping proudly forward, he stalked into the room. He was followed by Lawford and Gray at a little

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The stranger turned on him a scowl, into which it seemed as if he would willingly have thrown the power of the fabled basilisk. Then stepping proudly forward, he stalked into the room. He was followed by Lawford and Gray at a little

distance. The messenger remained in the doorway. The unhappy young woman had heard the disturbance, and guessed the cause too truly. It is possible she might even have seen the strangers on their descent from the carriage. When they entered the room she was on her knees, beside an easy-chair, her face in a silk wrapper that was hung over it. The man called Monçada uttered a single word; by the accent it might have been something equivalent to 'wretch,' but none knew its import. The female gave a convulsive shudder, such as that by which a half-dying soldier is affected on receiving a second wound. But, without minding her emotion, Monçada seized her by the arm, and with little gentleness raised her to her feet, on which she seemed to stand only because she was supported by his strong grasp. He then pulled from her face the mask which she had hitherto worn. The poor creature still endeavoured to shroud her face, by covering it with her left hand, as the manner in which she was held prevented her from using the aid of the right. With little effort her father secured that hand also, which, indeed, was of itself far too little to serve the purpose of concealment, and showed her beautiful face, burning with blushes and covered with tears.

'You, *alcalde*, and you, surgeon,' he said to Lawford and Gray, with a foreign action and accent, 'this woman is my daughter, the same Zilia Monçada who is signalled in that protocol. Make way, and let me carry her where her crimes may be atoned for.'

'Are you that person's daughter?' said Lawford to the lady.

'She understands no English,' said Gray; and addressing his patient in French, conjured her to let him know whether she was that man's daughter or not, assuring her of protection if the fact were otherwise. The answer was murmured faintly, but was too distinctly intelligible — 'He was her father.'

All farther title of interference seemed now ended. The messenger arrested his prisoner, and, with some delicacy, required the assistance of the females to get her conveyed to the carriage in waiting.

Gray again interfered. 'You will not,' he said, 'separate the mother and the infant?'

Zilia de Monçada heard the question (which, being addressed to the father, Gray had inconsiderately uttered in French), and it seemed as if it recalled to her recollection the existence of the helpless creature to which she had given birth, forgotten for a moment amongst the accumulated horrors of her father's

presence. She uttered a shriek, expressing poignant grief, and turned her eyes on her father with the most intense supplication.

'To the parish with the bastard!' said Monçada; while the helpless mother sunk lifeless into the arms of the females, who had now gathered round her.

'That will not pass, sir,' said Gideon. 'If you are father to that lady, you must be grandfather to the helpless child; and you must settle in some manner for its future provision, or refer us to some responsible person.'

Monçada looked towards Lawford, who expressed himself satisfied of the propriety of what Gray said.

'I object not to pay for whatever the wretched child may require,' he said; 'and if you, sir,' addressing Gray, 'choose to take charge of him, and breed him up, you shall have what will better your living.'

The doctor was about to refuse a charge so uncivilly offered; but after a moment's reflection he replied, 'I think so indifferently of the proceedings I have witnessed, and of those concerned in them, that, if the mother desires that I should retain the charge of this child, I will not refuse to do so.'

Monçada spoke to his daughter, who was just beginning to recover from her swoon, in the same language in which he had first addressed her. The proposition which he made seemed highly acceptable, as she started from the arms of the females, and, advancing to Gray, seized his hand, kissed it, bathed it in her tears, and seemed reconciled, even in parting with her child, by the consideration that the infant was to remain under his guardianship.

'Good, kind man,' she said in her indifferent French, 'you have saved both mother and child.'

The father, meanwhile, with mercantile deliberation, placed in Mr. Lawford's hands notes and bills to the amount of a thousand pounds, which he stated was to be vested for the child's use, and advanced in such portions as his board and education might require. In the event of any correspondence on his account being necessary, as in case of death or the like, he directed that communication should be made to Signor Matthias Monçada, under cover to a certain banking-house in London.

'But beware,' he said to Gray, 'how you trouble me about these concerns, unless in case of absolute necessity.'

'You need not fear, sir,' replied Gray: 'I have seen nothing to-day which can induce me to desire a more intimate correspondence with you than may be indispensable.'

While Lawford drew up a proper minute of this transaction, by which he himself and Gray were named trustees for the child, Mr. Gray attempted to restore to the lady the balance of the considerable sum of money which Tresham (if such was his real name) had formerly deposited with him. With every species of gesture by which hands, eyes, and even feet, could express rejection, as well as in her own broken French, she repelled the proposal of reimbursement, while she entreated that Gray would consider the money as his own property; and at the same time forced upon him a ring set with brilliants, which seemed of considerable value. The father then spoke to her a few stern words, which she heard with an air of mingled agony and submission.

'I have given her a few minutes to see and weep over the miserable being which has been the seal of her dishonour,' said the stern father. 'Let us retire and leave her alone. You,' to the messenger, 'watch the door of the room on the outside.'

Gray, Lawford, and Monçada retired to the parlour accordingly, where they waited in silence, each busied with his own reflections, till, within the space of half an hour, they received information that the lady was ready to depart.

'It is well,' replied Monçada; 'I am glad she has yet sense enough left to submit to that which needs must be.'

So saying, he ascended the stair, and returned, leading down his daughter, now again masked and veiled. As she passed Gray she uttered the words, 'My child — my child!' in a tone of unutterable anguish; then entered the carriage, which was drawn up as close to the door of the doctor's house as the little inclosure would permit. The messenger, mounted on a led horse, and accompanied by a servant and assistant, followed the carriage, which drove rapidly off, taking the road which leads to Edinburgh. All who had witnessed this strange scene now departed to make their conjectures, and some to count their gains; for money had been distributed among the females who had attended on the lady with so much liberality as considerably to reconcile them to the breach of the rights of womanhood inflicted by the precipitate removal of the patient.

CHAPTER II

THE last cloud of dust which the wheels of the carriage had raised was dissipated, when dinner, which claims a share of human thoughts even in the midst of the most marvellous and affecting incidents, recurred to those of Mrs. Gray.

‘Indeed, doctor, you will stand glowering out of the window till some other patient calls for you, and then have to set off without your dinner. And I hope Mr. Lawford will take pot-luck with us, for it is just his own hour; and indeed we had something rather better than ordinary for this poor lady — lamb and spinage and a veal florentine.’

The surgeon started as from a dream, and joined in his wife’s hospitable request, to which Lawford willingly assented.

We will suppose the meal finished, a bottle of old and generous Antigua upon the table, and a modest little punch-bowl judiciously replenished for the accommodation of the doctor and his guest. Their conversation naturally turned on the strange scene which they had witnessed, and the town-clerk took considerable merit for his presence of mind.

‘I am thinking, doctor,’ said he, ‘you might have brewed a bitter browst to yourself if I had not come in as I did.’

‘Troth, and it might very well so be,’ answered Gray; ‘for, to tell you the truth, when I saw yonder fellow vapouring with his pistols among the women folk in my own house, the old Cameronian spirit began to rise in me, and little thing would have made me cleek to the poker.’

‘Hoot — hoot! that would never have done. Na — na,’ said the man of law, ‘this was a case where a little prudence was worth all the pistols and pokers in the world.’

‘And that was just what I thought when I sent to you, Clerk Lawford,’ said the doctor.

‘A wiser man he could not have called on to a difficult case,’ added Mrs. Gray, as she sat with her work at a little distance from the table.

'Thanks t' ye, and here 's t' ye, my good neighbour,' answered the scribe; 'will you not let me help you to another glass of punch, Mrs. Gray?' This being declined, he proceeded. 'I am jalousing that the messenger and his warrant were just brought in to prevent any opposition. Ye saw how quietly he behaved after I had laid down the law; I'll never believe the lady is in any risk from him. But the father is a dour chield; depend upon it, he has bred up the young filly on the curb-rein, and that has made the poor thing start off the course. I should not be surprised that he took her abroad and shut her up in a convent.'

'Hardly,' replied Doctor Gray, 'if it be true, as I suspect, that both the father and daughter are of the Jewish persuasion.'

'A Jew!' said Mrs. Gray; 'and have I been taking a' this fyke about a Jew? I thought she seemed to gie a scunner at the eggs and bacon that Nurse Simson spoke about to her. But I thought Jews had aye had lang beards, and yon man's face is just like one of our ain folks'. I have seen the doctor with a langer beard himsell, when he has not had leisure to shave.'

'That might have been Mr. Monçada's case,' said Lawford, 'for he seemed to have had a hard journey. But the Jews are often very respectable people, Mrs. Gray; they have no territorial property, because the law is against them there, but they have a good hank in the money market — plenty of stock in the funds, Mrs. Gray; and, indeed, I think this poor young woman is better with her ain father, though he be a Jew and a dour chield into the bargain, than she would have been with the loon that wrangled her, who is, by your account, Dr. Gray, baith a Papist and a rebel. The Jews are well attached to government; they hate the Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender as much as any honest man among ourselves.'

'I cannot admire either of the gentlemen,' said Gideon. 'But it is but fair to say, that I saw Mr. Monçada when he was highly incensed, and to all appearance not without reason. Now, this other man, Tresham, if that be his name, was haughty to me, and I think something careless of the poor young woman, just at the time when he owed her most kindness, and me some thankfulness. I am, therefore, of your opinion, Clerk Lawford, that the Christian is the worse bargain of the two.'

'And you think of taking care of this wean yourself, doctor? That is what I call the good Samaritan.'

'At cheap cost, clerk: the child, if it lives, has enough to bring it up decently, and set it out in life, and I can teach it

an honourable and useful profession. It will be rather an amusement than a trouble to me, and I want to make some remarks on the childish diseases, which, with God's blessing, the child must come through under my charge; and since Heaven has sent us no children——'

'Hoot—hoot!' said the town-clerk, 'you are in ower great a hurry now—you havena been sae lang married yet. Mrs. Gray, dinna let my daffing chase you away; we will be for a dish of tea belive, for the doctor and I are nae glass-breakers.'

Four years after this conversation took place the event happened at the possibility of which the town-clerk had hinted; and Mrs. Gray presented her husband with an infant daughter. But good and evil are strangely mingled in this sublunary world. The fulfilment of his anxious longing for posterity was attended with the loss of his simple and kind-hearted wife, one of the most heavy blows which fate could inflict on poor Gideon, and his house was made desolate even by the event which had promised for months before to add new comforts to its humble roof. Gray felt the shock as men of sense and firmness feel a decided blow, from the effects of which they never hope again fully to raise themselves. He discharged the duties of his profession with the same punctuality as ever, was easy, and even to appearance cheerful, in his intercourse with society; but the sunshine of existence was gone. Every morning he missed the affectionate charges which recommended to him to pay attention to his own health while he was labouring to restore that blessing to his patients. Every evening, as he returned from his weary round, it was without the consciousness of a kind and affectionate reception from one eager to tell, and interested to hear, all the little events of the day. His whistle, which used to arise clear and strong so soon as Middlemas steeple was in view, was now for ever silenced, and the rider's head drooped, while the tired horse, lacking the stimulus of his master's hand and voice, seemed to shuffle along as if it experienced a share of his despondency. There were times when he was so much dejected as to be unable to endure even the presence of his little Menie, in whose infant countenance he could trace the lineaments of the mother, of whose loss she had been the innocent and unconscious cause. 'Had it not been for this poor child——' he would think; but, instantly aware that the sentiment was sinful, he would snatch the infant to his breast and load it with caresses, then hastily desire it to be removed from the parlour.

The Mahometans have a fanciful idea that the true believer, in his passage to Paradise, is under the necessity of passing barefooted over a bridge composed of red-hot iron. But on this occasion all the pieces of paper which the Moslem has preserved during his life, lest some holy thing being written upon them might be profaned, arrange themselves between his feet and the burning metal, and so save him from injury. In the same manner, the effects of kind and benevolent actions are sometimes found, even in this world, to assuage the pangs of subsequent afflictions.

Thus, the greatest consolation which poor Gideon could find after his heavy deprivation was in the frolic fondness of Richard Middlemas, the child who was in so singular a manner thrown upon his charge. Even at this early age he was eminently handsome. When silent or out of humour, his dark eyes and striking countenance presented some recollections of the stern character imprinted on the features of his supposed father; but when he was gay and happy, which was much more frequently the case, these clouds were exchanged for the most frolicsome, mirthful expression that ever dwelt on the laughing and thoughtless aspect of a child. He seemed to have a tact beyond his years in discovering and conforming to the peculiarities of human character. His nurse, one prime object of Richard's observance, was Nurse Jamieson, or, as she was more commonly called for brevity, and *par excellence*, Nurse. This was the person who had brought him up from infancy. She had lost her own child, and soon after her husband, and being thus a lone woman, had, as used to be common in Scotland, remained a member of Dr. Gray's family. After the death of his wife, she gradually obtained the principal superintendence of the whole household; and being an honest and capable manager, was a person of very great importance in the family.

She was bold in her temper, violent in her feelings, and, as often happens with those in her condition, was as much attached to Richard Middlemas, whom she had once nursed at her bosom, as if he had been her own son. This affection the child repaid by all the tender attentions of which his age was capable.

Little Dick was also distinguished by the fondest and kindest attachment to his guardian and benefactor, Dr. Gray. He was officious in the right time and place, quiet as a lamb when his patron seemed inclined to study or to muse, active and assiduous to assist or divert him whenever it seemed to be

wished, and in choosing his opportunities he seemed to display an address far beyond his childish years.

As time passed on, this pleasing character seemed to be still more refined. In everything like exercise or amusement he was the pride and the leader of the boys of the place, over the most of whom his strength and activity gave him a decided superiority. At school his abilities were less distinguished, yet he was a favourite with the master, a sensible and useful teacher.

'Richard is not swift,' he used to say to his patron, Dr. Gray, 'but then he is sure; and it is impossible not to be pleased with a child who is so very desirous to give satisfaction.'

Young Middlemas's grateful affection to his patron seemed to increase with the expanding of his faculties, and found a natural and pleasing mode of displaying itself in his attentions to little Menie¹ Gray. Her slightest hint was Richard's law, and it was in vain that he was summoned forth by a hundred shrill voices to take the lead in hye-spye or at football if it was little Menie's pleasure that he should remain within and build card-houses for her amusement. At other times, he would take the charge of the little damsel entirely under his own care, and be seen wandering with her on the borough common, collecting wild flowers or knitting caps made of bul-rushes. Menie was attached to Dick Middlemas in proportion to his affectionate assiduities; and the father saw with pleasure every new mark of attention to his child on the part of his *protégé*.

During the time that Richard was silently advancing from a beautiful child into a fine boy, and approaching from a fine boy to the time when he must be termed a handsome youth, Mr. Gray wrote twice a-year with much regularity to Mr. Monçada, through the channel that gentleman had pointed out. The benevolent man thought that, if the wealthy grandfather could only see his relative, of whom any family might be proud, he would be unable to persevere in his resolution of treating as an outcast one so nearly connected with him in blood, and so interesting in person and disposition. He thought it his duty, therefore, to keep open the slender and oblique communication with the boy's maternal grandfather, as that which might, at some future period, lead to a closer connexion. Yet the correspondence could not, in other respects, be agreeable to a man of spirit like Mr. Gray. His own letters were as

¹ Marion.

short as possible, merely rendering an account of his ward's expenses, including a moderate board to himself, attested by Mr. Lawford, his co-trustee; and intimating Richard's state of health, and his progress in education, with a few words of brief but warm eulogy upon his goodness of head and heart. But the answers he received were still shorter. 'Mr. Monçada,' such was their usual tenor, 'acknowledges Mr. Gray's letter of such a date, notices the contents, and requests Mr. Gray to persist in the plan which he has hitherto prosecuted on the subject of their correspondence.' On occasions where extraordinary expenses seem likely to be incurred, the remittances were made with readiness.

That day fortnight after Mrs. Gray's death, fifty pounds were received, with a note, intimating that it was designed to put the child R. M. into proper mourning. The writer had added two or three words, desiring that the surplus should be at Mr. Gray's disposal, to meet the additional expenses of this period of calamity; but Mr. Monçada had left the phrase unfinished, apparently in despair of turning it suitably into English. Gideon, without farther investigation, quietly added the sum to the account of his ward's little fortune, contrary to the opinion of Mr. Lawford, who, aware that he was rather a loser than a gainer by the boy's residence in his house, was desirous that his friend should not omit an opportunity of recovering some part of his expenses on that score. But Gray was proof against all remonstrance.

As the boy advanced towards his fourteenth year, Dr. Gray wrote a more elaborate account of his ward's character, acquirements, and capacity. He added, that he did this for the purpose of enabling Mr. Monçada to judge how the young man's future education should be directed. Richard, he observed, was arrived at the point where education, losing its original and general character, branches off into different paths of knowledge, suitable to particular professions, and when it was therefore become necessary to determine which of them it was his pleasure that young Richard should be trained for; and he would, on his part, do all he could to carry Mr. Monçada's wishes into execution, since the amiable qualities of the boy made him as dear to him, though but a guardian, as he could have been to his own father.

The answer, which arrived in the course of a week or ten days, was fuller than usual, and written in the first person. 'Mr. Gray,' such was the tenor, 'our meeting has been under

such circumstances as could not make us favourably known to each other at the time. But I have the advantage of you, since, knowing your motives for entertaining an indifferent opinion of me, I could respect them, and you at the same time ; whereas you, unable to comprehend the motives — I say, you, being unacquainted with the infamous treatment I had received, could not understand the reasons that I have for acting as I have done. Deprived, sir, by the act of a villain, of my child, and she despoiled of honour, I cannot bring myself to think of beholding the creature, however innocent, whose look must always remind me of hatred and of shame. Keep the poor child by you, educate him to your own profession, but take heed that he looks no higher than to fill such a situation in life as you yourself worthily occupy, or some other line of like importance. For the condition of a farmer, a country lawyer, a medical practitioner, or some such retired course of life, the means of outfit and education shall be amply supplied. But I must warn him and you that any attempt to intrude himself on me further than I may especially permit will be attended with the total forfeiture of my favour and protection. So, having made known my mind to you, I expect you will act accordingly.'

The receipt of this letter determined Gideon to have some explanation with the boy himself, in order to learn if he had any choice among the professions thus opened to him ; convinced, at the same time, from his docility of temper, that he would refer the selection to his (Dr. Gray's) better judgment.

He had previously, however, the unpleasing task of acquainting Richard Middlemas with the mysterious circumstances attending his birth, of which he presumed him to be entirely ignorant, simply because he himself had never communicated them, but had let the boy consider himself as the orphan child of a distant relation. But, though the doctor himself was silent, he might have remembered that Nurse Jamieson had the handsome enjoyment of her tongue, and was disposed to use it liberally.

From a very early period Nurse Jamieson, amongst the variety of legendary lore which she instilled into her foster-son, had not forgotten what she called the awful season of his coming into the world ; the personable appearance of his father, a grand gentleman, who looked as if the whole world lay at his feet ; the beauty of his mother, and the terrible blackness of the mask which she wore, her een that glanced like diamonds,

and the diamonds she wore on her fingers, that could be compared to nothing but her own een, the fairness of her skin, and the colour of her silk rokelay, with much proper stuff to the same purpose. Then she expatiated on the arrival of his grandfather, and the awful man, armed with pistol, dirk, and claymore (the last weapons existed only in Nurse's imagination), the very ogre of a fairy tale; then all the circumstances of the carrying off his mother, while bank-notes were flying about the house like screeds of brown paper, and gold guineas were as plenty as chuckie-stanes. All this, partly to please and interest the boy, partly to indulge her own talent for amplification, Nurse told with so many additional circumstances and gratuitous commentaries, that the real transaction, mysterious and odd as it certainly was, sunk into tameness before the nurse's edition, like humble prose contrasted with the boldest flights of poetry.

To hear all this did Richard seriously incline, and still more was he interested with the idea of his valiant father coming for him unexpectedly at the head of a gallant regiment, with music playing and colours flying, and carrying his son away on the most beautiful pony eyes ever beheld; or his mother, bright as the day, might suddenly appear in her coach-and-six, to reclaim her beloved child; or his repentant grandfather, with his pockets stuffed out with bank-notes, would come to atone for his past cruelty, by heaping his neglected grandchild with unexpected wealth. Sure was Nurse Jamieson 'that it wanted but a blink of her bairn's bonny ee to turn their hearts, as Scripture sayeth; and as strange things had been, as they should come a'thegither to the town at the same time, and make such a day as had never been seen in Middlemas; and then her bairn would never be called by that Lowland name of Middlemas any more, which sounded as if it had been gathered out of the town gutter; but would be called Galatian,¹ or Sir William Wallace, or Robin Hood, or after some other of the great princes named in story-books.'

Nurse Jamieson's history of the past and prospects of the future were too flattering not to excite the most ambitious visions in the mind of a boy who naturally felt a strong desire of rising in the world, and was conscious of possessing the powers necessary to his advancement. The incidents of his birth resembled those he found commemorated in the tales which he read or listened to; and there seemed no reason why his own adventures should not have a termination corresponding

¹ Galatian is the name of a person famous in Christmas gambols.

to those of such veracious histories. In a word, while good Doctor Gray imagined that his pupil was dwelling in utter ignorance of his origin, Richard was meditating upon nothing else than the time and means by which he anticipated his being extricated from the obscurity of his present condition, and enabled to assume the rank to which, in his own opinion, he was entitled by birth.

So stood the feelings of the young man, when, one day after dinner, the doctor, snuffing the candle, and taking from his pouch the great leathern pocket-book in which he deposited particular papers, with a small supply of the most necessary and active medicines, he took from it Mr. Monçada's letter, and requested Richard Middlemas's serious attention, while he told him some circumstances concerning himself, which it greatly imported him to know. Richard's dark eyes flashed fire, the blood flushed his broad and well-formed forehead — the hour of explanation was at length come. He listened to the narrative of Gideon Gray, which, the reader may believe, being altogether divested of the gilding which Nurse Jamieson's imagination had bestowed upon it, and reduced to what mercantile men termed the 'needful,' exhibited little more than the tale of a child of shame, deserted by its father and mother, and brought up on the reluctant charity of a more distant relation, who regarded him as the living, though unconscious, evidence of the disgrace of his family, and would more willingly have paid for the expenses of his funeral than that of the food which was grudgingly provided for him. 'Temple and tower,' a hundred flattering edifices of Richard's childish imagination, went to the ground at once, and the pain which attended their demolition was rendered the more acute by a sense of shame that he should have nursed such reveries. He remained, while Gideon continued his explanation, in a dejected posture, his eyes fixed on the ground, and the veins of his forehead swollen with contending passions.

'And now, my dear Richard,' said the good surgeon, 'you must think what you can do for yourself, since your grandfather leaves you the choice of three honourable professions, by any of which, well and wisely prosecuted, you may become independent if not wealthy, and respectable if not great. You will naturally desire a little time for consideration.'

'Not a minute,' said the boy, raising his head and looking boldly at his guardian. 'I am a free-born Englishman, and will return to England if I think fit.'

'A free-born fool you are,' said Gray. 'You were born, as I think, and no one can know better than I do, in the blue room of Stevenlaw's Land, in the townhead of Middlemas, if you call that being a free-born Englishman.'

'But Tom Hillary' — this was an apprentice of Clerk Lawford, who had of late been a great friend and adviser of young Middlemas — 'Tom Hillary says that I am a free-born Englishman, notwithstanding, in right of my parents.'

'Pooh, child! what do we know of your parents? But what has your being an Englishman to do with the present question?'

'Oh, doctor!' answered the boy, bitterly, 'you know we from the south side of Tweed cannot scramble so hard as you do. The Scots are too moral, and too prudent, and too robust for a poor pudding-eater to live amongst them, whether as a parson, or as a lawyer, or as a doctor — with your pardon, sir.'

'Upon my life, Dick,' said Gray, 'this Tom Hillary will turn your brain. What is the meaning of all this trash?'

'Tom Hillary says that the parson lives by the sins of the people, the lawyer by their distresses, and the doctor by their diseases — always asking your pardon, sir.'

'Tom Hillary,' replied the doctor, 'should be drummed out of the borough. A whipper-snapper of an attorney's apprentice, run away from Newcastle! If I hear him talking so, I'll teach him to speak with more reverence of the learned professions. Let me hear no more of Tom Hillary, whom you have seen far too much of lately. Think a little, like a lad of sense, and tell me what answer I am to give to Mr. Monçada.'

'Tell him,' said the boy, the tone of affected sarcasm laid aside, and that of injured pride substituted in its room — 'tell him that my soul revolts at the obscure lot he recommends to me. I am determined to enter my father's profession, the army, unless my grandfather chooses to receive me into his house and place me in his own line of business.'

'Yes, and make you his partner, I suppose, and acknowledge you for his heir?' said Dr. Gray; 'a thing extremely likely to happen, no doubt, considering the way in which he has brought you up all along, and the terms in which he now writes concerning you.'

'Then, sir, there is one thing which I can demand of you,' replied the boy. 'There is a large sum of money in your hands belonging to me; and since it is consigned to you for my use, I demand you should make the necessary advances to

procure a commission in the army, account to me for the balance; and so, with thanks for past favours, I will give you no trouble in future.'

'Young man,' said the doctor, gravely, 'I am very sorry to see that your usual prudence and good-humour are not proof against the disappointment of some idle expectations which you had not the slightest reason to entertain. It is very true that there is a sum which, in spite of various expenses, may still approach to a thousand pounds or better, which remains in my hands for your behoof. But I am bound to dispose of it according to the will of the donor; and, at any rate, you are not entitled to call for it until you come to years of discretion—a period from which you are six years distant according to law, and which, in one sense, you will never reach at all, unless you alter your present unreasonable crotchets. But come, Dick, this is the first time I have seen you in so absurd a humour, and you have many things, I own, in your situation to apologise for impatience even greater than you have displayed. But you should not turn your resentment on me, that am no way in fault. You should remember that I was your earliest and only friend, and took charge of you when every other person forsook you.'

'I do not thank you for it,' said Richard, giving way to a burst of uncontrolled passion. 'You might have done better for me had you pleased.'

'And in what manner, you ungrateful boy?' said Gray, whose composure was a little ruffled.

'You might have flung me under the wheels of their carriages as they drove off, and have let them trample on the body of their child, as they have done on his feelings.'

So saying, he rushed out of the room, and shut the door behind him with great violence, leaving his guardian astonished at his sudden and violent change of temper and manner.

'What the deuce can have possessed him? Ah, well. High-spirited, and disappointed in some follies which that Tom Hillary has put into his head. But his is a case for anodynes, and shall be treated accordingly.'

While the doctor formed this good-natured resolution, young Middlemas rushed to Nurse Jamieson's apartment, where poor Menie, to whom his presence always gave holiday feelings, hastened to exhibit for his admiration a new doll, of which she had made the acquisition. No one, generally, was more interested in Menie's amusements than Richard; but at present

Richard, like his celebrated namesake, was not i' the vein. He threw off the little damsel so carelessly, almost so rudely, that the doll flew out of Menie's hand, fell on the hearthstone, and broke its waxen face. The rudeness drew from Nurse Jamieson a rebuke, even although the culprit was her darling.

'Hout awa', Richard, that wasna like yoursell, to guide Miss Menie that gate. Haud your tongue, Miss Menie, and I'll soon mend the baby's face.'

But if Menie cried, she did not cry for the doll; and while the tears flowed silently down her cheeks, she sat looking at Dick Middlemas with a childish face of fear, sorrow, and wonder. Nurse Jamieson was soon diverted from her attention to Menie Gray's distresses, especially as she did not weep aloud, and her attention became fixed on the altered countenance, red eyes, and swollen features of her darling foster-child. She instantly commenced an investigation into the cause of his distress, after the usual inquisitorial manner of matrons of her class. 'What is the matter wi' my bairn?' and 'Wha has been vexing my bairn?' with similar questions, at last extorted this reply—

'I am not your bairn—I am no one's bairn—no one's son. I am an outcast from my family, and belong to no one. Dr. Gray has told me so himself.'

'And did he cast up to my bairn that he was a bastard? Troth he wasna blate. My certie, your father was a better man than ever stood on the doctor's shanks—a handsome grand gentleman, with an ee like a gled's and a step like a Highland piper.'

Nurse Jamieson had got on a favourite topic, and would have expatiated long enough, for she was a professed admirer of masculine beauty, but there was something which displeased the boy in her last simile; so he cut the conversation short by asking whether she knew exactly how much money his grandfather had left with Dr. Gray for his maintenance. 'She could not say—didna ken—an awfu' sum it was to pass out of ae man's hand. She was sure it wasna less than ae hundred pounds, and it might weel be twa.' In short, she knew nothing about the matter; 'but she was sure Dr. Gray would count to him to the last farthing, for everybody kennd that he was a just man where siller was concerned. However, if her bairn wanted to ken mair about it, to be sure the town-clerk could tell him all about it.'

Richard Middlemas arose and left the apartment, without

saying more. He went immediately to visit the old town-clerk, to whom he had made himself acceptable, as indeed he had done to most of the dignitaries about the burgh. He introduced the conversation by the proposal which had been made to him for choosing a profession, and after speaking of the mysterious circumstances of his birth and the doubtful prospects which lay before him, he easily led the town-clerk into conversation as to the amount of the funds, and heard the exact state of the money in his guardian's hands, which corresponded with the information he had already received. He next sounded the worthy scribe on the possibility of his going into the army; but received a second confirmation of the intelligence Mr. Gray had given him, being informed that no part of the money could be placed at his disposal till he was of age, and then not without the especial consent of both his guardians, and particularly that of his master. He therefore took leave of the town-clerk, who, much approving the cautious manner in which he spoke, and his prudent selection of an adviser at this important crisis of his life, intimated to him that, should he choose the law, he would himself receive him into his office upon a very moderate apprentice-fee, and would part with Tom Hillary to make room for him, as the lad was 'rather pragmatistical, and plagued him with speaking about his English practice, which they had nothing to do with on this side of the Border—the Lord be thanked!'

Middlemas thanked him for his kindness, and promised to consider his kind offer, in case he should determine upon following the profession of the law.

From Tom Hillary's master Richard went to Tom Hillary himself, who chanced then to be in the office. He was a lad about twenty, as smart as small, but distinguished for the accuracy with which he dressed his hair, and the splendour of a laced hat and embroidered waistcoat, with which he graced the church of Middlemas on Sundays. Tom Hillary had been bred an attorney's clerk in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, but, for some reason or other, had found it more convenient of late years to reside in Scotland, and was recommended to the town-clerk of Middlemas by the accuracy and beauty with which he transcribed the records of the burgh. It is not improbable that the reports concerning the singular circumstances of Richard Middlemas's birth, and the knowledge that he was actually possessed of a considerable sum of money, induced Hillary, though so much his senior, to admit the lad to his company,

and enrich his youthful mind with some branches of information which, in that retired corner, his pupil might otherwise have been some time in attaining. Amongst these were certain games at cards and dice, in which the pupil paid, as was reasonable, the price of initiation by his losses to his instructor. After a long walk with this youngster, whose advice, like the unwise son of the wisest of men, he probably valued more than that of his more aged counsellors, Richard Middlemas returned to his lodgings in Stevenlaw's Land, and went to bed sad and supperless.

The next morning Richard arose with the sun, and his night's rest appeared to have had its frequent effect, in cooling the passions and correcting the understanding. Little Menie was the first person to whom he made the *amende honorable*; and a much smaller propitiation than the new doll with which he presented her would have been accepted as an atonement for a much greater offence. Menie was one of those pure spirits to whom a state of unkindness, if the estranged person has been a friend, is a state of pain, and the slightest advance of her friend and protector was sufficient to regain all her childish confidence and affection.

The father did not prove more inexorable than Menie had done. Mr. Gray, indeed, thought he had good reason to look cold upon Richard at their next meeting, being not a little hurt at the ungrateful treatment which he had received on the preceding evening. But Middlemas disarmed him at once by frankly pleading that he had suffered his mind to be carried away by the supposed rank and importance of his parents into an idle conviction that he was one day to share them. The letter of his grandfather, which condemned him to banishment and obscurity for life, was, he acknowledged, a very severe blow; and it was with deep sorrow that he reflected that the irritation of his disappointment had led him to express himself in a manner far short of the respect and reverence of one who owed Mr. Gray the duty and affection of a son, and ought to refer to his decision every action of his life. Gideon, propitiated by an admission so candid, and made with so much humility, readily dismissed his resentment, and kindly inquired of Richard whether he had bestowed any reflection upon the choice of profession which had been subjected to him; offering, at the same time, to allow him all reasonable time to make up his mind.

On this subject, Richard Middlemas answered with the

same promptitude and candour. 'He had,' he said, 'in order to forming his opinion more safely, consulted with his friend, the town-clerk.' The doctor nodded approbation. 'Mr. Lawford had, indeed, been most friendly, and had even offered to take him into his own office. But if his father and benefactor would permit him to study, under his instructions, the noble art in which he himself enjoyed such a deserved reputation, the mere hope that he might by and by be of some use to Mr. Gray in his business would greatly overbalance every other consideration. Such a course of education, and such a use of professional knowledge when he had acquired it, would be a greater spur to his industry than the prospect even of becoming town-clerk of Middlemas in his proper person.'

As the young man expressed it to be his firm and unalterable choice to study medicine under his guardian, and to remain a member of his family, Dr. Gray informed Mr. Moncada of the lad's determination; who, to testify his approbation, remitted to the doctor the sum of £100 as apprentice-fee—a sum nearly three times as much as Gray's modesty had hinted at as necessary.

Shortly after, when Dr. Gray and the town-clerk met at the small club of the burgh, their joint theme was the sense and steadiness of Richard Middlemas.

'Indeed,' said the town-clerk, 'he is such a friendly and disinterested boy, that I could not get him to accept a place in my office for fear he should be thought to be pushing himself forward at the expense of Tam Hillary.'

'And, indeed, clerk,' said Gray, 'I have sometimes been afraid that he kept too much company with that Tam Hillary of yours; but twenty Tam Hillarys would not corrupt Dick Middlemas.'

CHAPTER III

Dick was come to high renown
Since he commenced physician ;
Tom was held by all the town
The better politician.

Tom and Dick.

AT the same period when Dr. Gray took under his charge his youthful lodger Richard Middlemas, he received proposals from the friends of one Adam Hartley to receive him also as an apprentice. The lad was the son of a respectable farmer on the English side of the Border, who, educating his eldest son to his own occupation, desired to make his second a medical man, in order to avail himself of the friendship of a great man, his landlord, who had offered to assist his views in life, and represented a doctor or surgeon as the sort of person to whose advantage his interest could be most readily applied. Middlemas and Hartley were therefore associated in their studies. In winter they were boarded in Edinburgh, for attending the medical classes, which were necessary for taking their degree. Three or four years thus passed on, and, from being mere boys, the two medical aspirants shot up into young men, who, being both very good-looking, well dressed, well bred, and having money in their pockets, became personages of some importance in the little town of Middlemas, where there was scarce anything that could be termed an aristocracy, and in which beaux were scarce and belles were plenty.

Each of the two had his especial partizans ; for, though the young men themselves lived in tolerable harmony together, yet, as usual in such cases, no one could approve of one of them without at the same time comparing him with, and asserting his superiority over, his companion.

Both were gay, fond of dancing, and sedulous attendants on the 'practeezings,' as he called them, of Mr. M'Pittoch, a dancing-master who, itinerant during the summer, became stationary

in the winter season, and afforded the youth of Middlemas the benefit of his instructions at the rate of twenty lessons for five shillings sterling. On these occasions each of Dr. Gray's pupils had his appropriate praise. Hartley danced with most spirit, Middlemas with a better grace. Mr. M'Pittoch would have turned out Richard against the country-side in the minuet, and wagered the thing dearest to him in the world, and that was his kit, upon his assured superiority ; but he admitted Hartley was superior to him in hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels.

In dress Hartley was most expensive, perhaps because his father afforded him better means of being so ; but his clothes were neither so tasteful when new nor so well preserved when they began to grow old as those of Richard Middlemas. Adam Hartley was sometimes fine, at other times rather slovenly, and on the former occasions looked rather too conscious of his splendour. His chum was at all times regularly neat and well dressed ; while at the same time he had an air of good-breeding, which made him appear always at ease ; so that his dress, whatever it was, seemed to be just what he ought to have worn at the time.

In their persons there was a still more strongly-marked distinction. Adam Hartley was full middle-size, stout, and well limbed ; and an open English countenance, of the genuine Saxon mould, showed itself among chestnut locks, until the hairdresser destroyed them. He loved the rough exercises of wrestling, boxing, leaping, and quarter-staff, and frequented, when he could obtain leisure, the bull-baitings and football matches by which the burgh was sometimes enlivened.

Richard, on the contrary, was dark, like his father and mother, with high features, beautifully formed, but exhibiting something of a foreign character ; and his person was tall and slim, though muscular and active. His address and manners must have been natural to him, for they were, in elegance and ease, far beyond any example which he could have found in his native burgh. He learned the use of the small-sword while in Edinburgh, and took lessons from a performer at the theatre, with the purpose of refining his mode of speaking. He became also an amateur of the drama, regularly attending the play-house, and assuming the tone of a critic in that and other lighter departments of literature. To fill up the contrast, so far as taste was concerned, Richard was a dexterous and successful angler, Adam a bold and unerring shot. Their efforts to surpass each other in supplying Dr. Gray's table rendered

his housekeeping much preferable to what it had been on former occasions ; and, besides, small presents of fish and game are always agreeable amongst the inhabitants of a country town, and contributed to increase the popularity of the young sportsmen.

While the burgh was divided, for lack of better subject of disputation, concerning the comparative merits of Dr. Gray's two apprentices, he himself was sometimes chosen the referee. But in this, as on other matters, the doctor was cautious. He said the lads were both good lads, and would be useful men in the profession if their heads were not carried with the notice which the foolish people of the burgh took of them, and the parties of pleasure that were so often taking them away from their business. No doubt it was natural for him to feel more confidence in Hartley, who came of 'kennd folk,' and was very near as good as a born Scotsman. But if he did feel such a partiality, he blamed himself for it, since the stranger child, so oddly cast upon his hands, had peculiar good right to such patronage and affection as he had to bestow ; and truly the young man himself seemed so grateful that it was impossible for him to hint the slightest wish that Dick Middlemas did not hasten to execute.

There were persons in the burgh of Middlemas who were indiscreet enough to suppose that Miss Menie must be a better judge than any other person of the comparative merits of these accomplished personages, respecting which the public opinion was generally divided. No one even of her greatest intimates ventured to put the question to her in precise terms ; but her conduct was narrowly observed, and the critics remarked that to Adam Hartley her attentions were given more freely and frankly. She laughed with him, chatted with him, and danced with him ; while to Dick Middlemas her conduct was more shy and distant. The premises seemed certain ; but the public were divided in the conclusions which were to be drawn from them.

It was not possible for the young men to be the subject of such discussions without being sensible that they existed ; and thus contrasted together by the little society in which they moved, they must have been made of better than ordinary clay if they had not themselves entered by degrees into the spirit of the controversy, and considered themselves as rivals for public applause.

Nor is it to be forgotten that Menie Gray was by this time

shot up into one of the prettiest young women, not of Middlemas only, but of the whole county in which the little burgh is situated. This, indeed, had been settled by evidence which could not be esteemed short of decisive. At the time of the races there were usually assembled in the burgh some company of the higher classes from the country around, and many of the sober burghers mended their incomes by letting their apartments, or taking in lodgers of quality, for the busy week. All the rural thanes and thanesses attended on these occasions; and such was the number of cocked hats and silken trains, that the little town seemed for a time totally to have changed its inhabitants. On this occasion persons of a certain quality only were permitted to attend upon the nightly balls which were given in the old town-house, and the line of distinction excluded Mr. Gray's family.

The aristocracy, however, used their privileges with some feelings of deference to the native beaux and belles of the burgh, who were thus doomed to hear the fiddles nightly without being permitted to dance to them. One evening in the race-week, termed the Hunters' Ball, was dedicated to general amusement, and liberated from the usual restrictions of etiquette. On this occasion all the respectable families in the town were invited to share the amusement of the evening, and to wonder at the finery, and be grateful for the condescension, of their betters. This was especially the case with the females, for the number of invitations to the gentlemen of the town was much more limited. Now, at this general muster, the beauty of Miss Gray's face and person had placed her, in the opinion of all competent judges, decidedly at the head of all the belles present, saving those with whom, according to the ideas of the place, it would hardly have been decent to compare her.

The laird of the ancient and distinguished house of Loupon-height did not hesitate to engage her hand during the greater part of the evening; and his mother, renowned for her stern assertion of the distinctions of rank, placed the little plebeian beside her at supper, and was heard to say that the surgeon's daughter behaved very prettily indeed, and seemed to know perfectly well where and what she was. As for the young laird himself, he capered so high, and laughed so uproariously, as to give rise to a rumour that he was minded to 'shoot madly from his sphere,' and to convert the village doctor's daughter into a lady of his own ancient name.

During this memorable evening, Middlemas and Hartley,

who had found room in the music gallery, witnessed the scene, and, as it would seem, with very different feelings. Hartley was evidently annoyed by the excess of attention which the gallant laird of Louponheight, stimulated by the influence of a couple of bottles of claret and by the presence of a partner who danced remarkably well, paid to Miss Menie Gray. He saw from his lofty stand all the dumb show of gallantry with the comfortable feelings of a famishing creature looking upon a feast which he is not permitted to share, and regarded every extraordinary frisk of the jovial laird as the same might have been looked upon by a gouty person, who apprehended that the dignitary was about to descend on his toes. At length, unable to restrain his emotion, he left the gallery and returned no more.

Far different was the demeanour of Middlemas. He seemed gratified and elevated by the attention which was generally paid to Miss Gray, and by the admiration she excited. On the valiant laird of Louponheight he looked with indescribable contempt, and amused himself with pointing out to the burgh dancing-master, who acted *pro tempore* as one of the band, the frolicsome bounds and pirouettes, in which that worthy displayed a great deal more of vigour than of grace.

'But ye shouldna laugh sae loud, Master Dick,' said the master of capers; 'he hasna had the advantage of a real gracefu' teacher, as ye have had; and troth, if he listed to tak some lessons, I think I could make some hand of his feet, for he is a souple chield, and has a gallant instep of his ain; and sic a laced hat hasna been seen on the causeway of Middlemas this mony a day. Ye are standing laughing there, Dick Middlemas; I would have you be sure he does not cut you out with your bonny partner yonder.'

'He be ——!' Middlemas was beginning a sentence which could not have concluded with strict attention to propriety, when the master of the band summoned M'Fittoch to his post by the following ireful expostulation — 'What are ye about, sir? Mind your bow-hand. How the deil d'ye think three fiddles is to keep down a bass, if yin o' them stands girning and gabbling as ye're doing? Play up, sir!'

Dick Middlemas, thus reduced to silence, continued, from his lofty station, like one of the gods of the Epicureans, to survey what passed below, without the gaities which he witnessed being able to excite more than a smile, which seemed, however, rather to indicate a good-humoured contempt for what was passing than a benevolent sympathy with the pleasures of others.

CHAPTER IV

Now hold thy tongue, Billy Bewick, he said,
Of peaceful talking let me be ;
But if thou art a man, as I think thou art,
Come ower the dike and fight with me.

Border Minstrelsy.

ON the morning after this gay evening, the two young men were labouring together in a plot of ground behind Stevenlaw's Land which the doctor had converted into a garden, where he raised, with a view to pharmacy as well as botany, some rare plants, which obtained the place from the vulgar the sounding name of the Physic Garden.¹ Mr. Gray's pupils readily complied with his wishes, that they would take some care of this favourite spot, to which both contributed their labours, after which Hartley used to devote himself to the cultivation of the kitchen garden, which he had raised into this respectability from a spot not excelling a common kail-yard, while Richard Middlemas did his utmost to decorate with flowers and shrubs a sort of arbour, usually called Miss Menie's bower.

At present, they were both in the botanic patch of the garden, when Dick Middlemas asked Hartley why he had left the ball so soon the evening before.

'I should rather ask you,' said Hartley, 'what pleasure you felt in staying there? I tell you, Dick, it is a shabby, low place this Middlemas of ours. In the smallest burgh in England every decent freeholder would have been asked if the member gave a ball.'

'What, Hartley!' said his companion, 'are you, of all men, a candidate for the honour of mixing with the first-born of the earth? Mercy on us! How will canny Northumberland (throwing a true Northern accent on the letter R) acquit himself? Methinks I see thee in thy pea-green suit, dancing a jig with the Honourable Miss Maddie MacFudgeon, while

¹ The Botanic Garden is so termed by the vulgar of Edinburgh.



chiefs and thanes around laugh as they would do at a hog in armour!

'You don't, or perhaps you won't, understand me,' said Hartley. 'I am not such a fool as to desire to be hail-fellow-well-met with these fine folks: I care as little for them as they do for me. But as they do not choose to ask us to dance, I don't see what business they have with our partners.'

'Partners, said you!' answered Middlemas; 'I don't think Menie is very often yours.'

'As often as I ask her,' answered Hartley, rather haughtily.

'Ay? Indeed? I did not think that. And hang me if I think so yet,' said Middlemas, with the same sarcastic tone. 'I tell thee, Adam, I will bet you a bowl of punch that Miss Gray will not dance with you the next time you ask her. All I stipulate is to know the day.'

'I will lay no bets about Miss Gray,' said Hartley; 'her father is my master, and I am obliged to him—I think I should act very scurvily if I were to make her the subject of any idle debate betwixt you and me.'

'Very right,' replied Middlemas; 'you should finish one quarrel before you begin another. Pray, saddle your pony, ride up to the gate of Louponheight Castle, and defy the baron to mortal combat for having presumed to touch the fair hand of Menie Gray.'

'I wish you would leave Miss Gray's name out of the question, and take your defiances to your fine folks in your own name, and see what they will say to the surgeon's apprentice.'

'Speak for yourself, if you please, Mr. Adam Hartley. I was not born a clown, like some folks, and should care little, if I saw it fit, to talk to the best of them at the ordinary, and make myself understood too.'

'Very likely,' answered Hartley, losing patience; 'you are one of themselves, you know—Middlemas of that ilk.'

'You scoundrel!' said Richard, advancing on him in fury, his taunting humour entirely changed into rage.

'Stand back,' said Hartley, 'or you will come by the worst; if you will break rude jests, you must put up with rough answers.'

'I will have satisfaction for this insult, by Heaven!'

'Why, so you shall, if you insist on it,' said Hartley; 'but better, I think, to say no more about the matter. We have both spoken what would have been better left unsaid. I was in the wrong to say what I said to you, although you did





provoke me. And now I have given you as much satisfaction as a reasonable man can ask.'

'Sir,' repeated Middlemas, 'the satisfaction which I demand is that of a gentleman: the doctor has a pair of pistols.'

'And a pair of mortars also, which are heartily at your service, gentlemen,' said Mr. Gray, coming forward from behind a yew hedge, where he had listened to the whole or greater part of this dispute. 'A fine story it would be of my apprentices shooting each other with my own pistols! Let me see either of you fit to treat a gunshot wound before you think of inflicting one. Go, you are both very foolish boys, and I cannot take it kind of either of you to bring the name of my daughter into such disputes as these. Harkye, lads, ye both owe me, I think, some portion of respect, and even of gratitude; it will be a poor return if, instead of living quietly with this poor motherless girl, like brothers with a sister, you should oblige me to increase my expense, and abridge my comfort, by sending my child from me for the few months that you are to remain here. Let me see you shake hands, and let us have no more of this nonsense.'

While their master spoke in this manner, both the young men stood before him in the attitude of self-convicted criminals. At the conclusion of his rebuke, Hartley turned frankly round and offered his hand to his companion, who accepted it, but after a moment's hesitation. There was nothing further passed on the subject, but the lads never resumed the same sort of intimacy which had existed betwixt them in their earlier acquaintance. On the contrary, avoiding every connexion not absolutely required by their situation, and abridging as much as possible even their indispensable intercourse in professional matters, they seemed as much estranged from each other as two persons residing in the same small house had the means of being.

As for Menie Gray, her father did not appear to entertain the least anxiety upon her account, although, from his frequent and almost daily absence from home, she was exposed to constant intercourse with two handsome young men, both, it might be supposed, ambitious of pleasing her more than most parents would have deemed entirely prudent. Nor was Nurse Jamieson — her menial situation and her excessive partiality for her foster-son considered — altogether such a matron as could afford her protection. Gideon, however, knew that his daughter possessed, in its fullest extent, the upright and pure integrity

of his own character, and that never father had less reason to apprehend that a daughter should deceive his confidence ; and, justly secure of her principles, he overlooked the danger to which he exposed her feelings and affections.

The intercourse betwixt Menie and the young men seemed now of a guarded kind on all sides. Their meeting was only at meals, and Miss Gray was at pains, perhaps by her father's recommendation, to treat them with the same degree of attention. This, however, was no easy matter ; for Hartley became so retiring, cold, and formal that it was impossible for her to sustain any prolonged intercourse with him ; whereas Middlemas, perfectly at his ease, sustained his part as formerly upon all occasions that occurred, and, without appearing to press his intimacy assiduously, seemed nevertheless to retain the complete possession of it.

The time drew nigh at length when the young men, freed from the engagements of their indentures, must look to play their own independent part in the world. Mr. Gray informed Richard Middlemas that he had written pressingly upon the subject to Monçada, and that more than once, but had not yet received an answer ; nor did he presume to offer his own advice until the pleasure of his grandfather should be known. Richard seemed to endure this suspense with more patience than the doctor thought belonged naturally to his character. He asked no questions, stated no conjectures, showed no anxiety, but seemed to await with patience the turn which events should take. 'My young gentleman,' thought Mr. Gray, 'has either fixed on some course in his own mind, or he is about to be more tractable than some points of his character have led me to expect.'

In fact, Richard had made an experiment on this inflexible relative, by sending Mr. Monçada a letter full of duty, and affection, and gratitude, desiring to be permitted to correspond with him in person, and promising to be guided in every particular by his will. The answer to this appeal was his own letter returned, with a note from the bankers whose cover had been used, saying, that any future attempt to intrude on Mr. Monçada would put a final period to their remittances.

While things were in this situation in Stevenlaw's Land, Adam Hartley one evening, contrary to his custom for several months, sought a private interview with his fellow-apprentice. He found him in the little arbour, and could not omit observing that Dick Middlemas, on his appearance, shoved into his bosom

a small packet, as if afraid of its being seen, and, snatching up a hoe, began to work with great devotion, like one who wished to have it thought that his whole soul was in his occupation.

'I wished to speak with you, Mr. Middlemas,' said Hartley; 'but I fear I interrupt you.'

'Not in the least,' said the other, laying down his hoe; 'I was only scratching up the weeds which the late showers have made rush up so numerously. I am at your service.'

Hartley proceeded to the harbour, and seated himself. Richard imitated his example, and seemed to wait for the proposed communication.

'I have had an interesting communication with Mr. Gray——' said Hartley, and there stopped, like one who finds himself entering upon a difficult task.

'I hope the explanation has been satisfactory?' said Middlemas.

'You shall judge. Doctor Gray was pleased to say something to me very civil about my proficiency in the duties of our profession; and, to my great astonishment, asked me whether, as he was now becoming old, I had any particular objection to continue in my present situation, but with some pecuniary advantages, for two years longer; at the end of which he promised to me that I should enter into partnership with him.'

'Mr. Gray is an undoubted judge,' said Middlemas, 'what person will best suit him as a professional assistant. The business may be worth £200 a-year, and an active assistant might go nigh to double it by riding Strath-Devon and the Carse. No great subject for division after all, Mr. Hartley.'

'But,' continued Hartley, 'that is not all. The doctor says—he proposes—in short, if I can render myself agreeable, in the course of these two years, to Miss Menie Gray—he proposes that, when they terminate, I should become his son as well as his partner.'

As he spoke, he kept his eye fixed on Richard's face, which was for a moment strongly agitated; but instantly recovering, he answered, in a tone where pique and offended pride vainly endeavoured to disguise themselves under an affectation of indifference, 'Well, Master Adam, I cannot but wish you joy of the patriarchal arrangement. You have served five years for a professional diploma—a sort of Leah, that privilege of killing and curing. Now you begin a new course of servitude for a lovely Rachel. Undoubtedly—perhaps it is rude in me to

of his own character, and that never father had less reason to apprehend that a daughter should deceive his confidence; and, justly secure of her principles, he overlooked the danger to which he exposed her feelings and affections.

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As time drew nigh at length when the young suspected that the arrangements of their indentures, if possessing Miss Gray's affections, and

'I' interrupted Middlemas. 'You are jesting, or you are jealous. You do yourself less, and me more, than justice; but the compliment is so great that I am obliged to you for the mistake.'

'That you may know,' answered Hartley, 'I do not speak either by guess or from what you call jealousy, I tell you frankly that Menie Gray herself told me the state of her affections. I naturally communicated to her the discourse I had with her father. I told her I was but too well convinced that at the present moment I did not possess that interest in her heart which alone might entitle me to request her acquiescence in the views which her father's goodness held out to me; but I entreated her not at once to decide against me, but give me an opportunity to make way in her affections, if possible, trusting that time, and the services which I should render to her father, might have an ultimate effect in my favour.'

'A most natural and modest request. But what did the young lady say in reply?'

'She is a noble-hearted girl, Richard Middlemas; and for her frankness alone, even without her beauty and her good sense, deserves an emperor. I cannot express the graceful modesty with which she told me that she knew too well the kindness, as she was pleased to call it, of my heart to expose me to the protracted pain of an unrequited passion. She candidly informed me that she had been long engaged to you

a small packet, as if afraid of its being seen, and, snatching up a hoe, began to work with great devotion, like one who wished to have it thought that his whole soul was in his occupation.

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'Is the explanation has been satisfactory?' said Middlemas, 'secret was mine as that she had consule. Doctor Gray was pleased to say so.'

'Mr. Middlemas,' said Hartley, 'in the least of this feeling on your part arises from the apprehension that your secret is less safe because it is in my keeping, I can assure you that such is my grateful sense of Miss Gray's goodness, in communicating, to save me pain, an affair of such delicacy to herself and you, that wild horses should tear me limb from limb before they forced a word of it from my lips.'

'Nay — nay, my dear friend,' said Middlemas, with a frankness of manner indicating a cordiality that had not existed between them for some time, 'you must allow me to be a little jealous in my turn. Your true lover cannot have a title to the name unless he be sometimes unreasonable; and somehow it seems odd she should have chosen for a confidant one whom I have often thought a formidable rival; and yet I am so far from being displeased, that I do not know that the dear, sensible girl could after all have made a better choice. It is time that the foolish coldness between us should be ended, as you must be sensible that its real cause lay in our rivalry. I have much need of good advice, and who can give it to me better than the old companion whose soundness of judgment I have always envied, even when some injudicious friends have given me credit for quicker parts?'

Hartley accepted Richard's proffered hand, but without any of the buoyancy of spirit with which it was offered.

'I do not intend,' he said, 'to remain many days in this place, perhaps not very many hours. But if, in the meanwhile,

I can benefit you, by advice or otherwise, you may fully command me. It is the only mode in which I can be of service to Menie Gray.'

'Love my mistress, love me; a happy pendant to the old proverb, "Love me, love my dog." Well, then, for Menie Gray's sake, if not for Dick Middlemas's — plague on that vulgar, tell-tale name! — will you, that are a stander-by, tell us who are the unlucky players what you think of this game of ours?'

'How can you ask such a question, when the field lies so fair before you? I am sure that Dr. Gray would retain you as his assistant upon the same terms which he proposed to me. You are the better match, in all worldly respects, for his daughter, having some capital to begin the world with.'

'All true; but methinks Mr. Gray has showed no great predilection for me in this matter.'

'If he has done injustice to your indisputable merit,' said Hartley, drily, 'the preference of his daughter has more than atoned for it.'

'Unquestionably; and dearly, therefore, do I love her; otherwise, Adam, I am not a person to grasp at the leavings of other people.'

'Richard,' replied Hartley, 'that pride of yours, if you do not check it, will render you both ungrateful and miserable. Mr. Gray's ideas are most friendly. He told me plainly that his choice of me as an assistant, and as a member of his family, had been a long time balanced by his early affection for you, until he thought he had remarked in you a decisive discontent with such limited prospects as his offer contained, and a desire to go abroad into the world and push, as it is called, your fortune. He said that, although it was very probable that you might love his daughter well enough to relinquish these ambitious ideas for her sake, yet the demons of Ambition and Avarice would return after the exorciser Love had exhausted the force of his spells, and then he thought he would have just reason to be anxious for his daughter's happiness.'

'By my faith, the worthy senior speaks scholarly and wisely,' answered Richard: 'I did not think he had been so clear-sighted. To say the truth, but for the beautiful Menie Gray, I should feel like a mill-horse, walking my daily round in this dull country, while other gay rovers are trying how the world will receive them. For instance, where do you yourself go?'

'A cousin of my mother's commands a ship in the Company's service. I intend to go with him as surgeon's mate. If I like

the sea service, I will continue in it; if not, I will enter some other line.' This Hartley said with a sigh.

'To India!' answered Richard; 'happy dog—to India! You may well bear with equanimity all disappointments sustained on this side of the globe. Oh, Delhi! oh, Golconda! have your names no power to conjure down idle recollections? India, where gold is won by steel; where a brave man cannot pitch his desire of fame and wealth so high but that he may realise it, if he have fortune to his friend? Is it possible that the bold adventurer can fix his thoughts on you, and still be dejected at the thoughts that a bonny blue-eyed lass looked favourably on a less lucky fellow than himself? Can this be?'

'Less lucky!' said Hartley. 'Can you, the accepted lover of Menie Gray, speak in that tone, even though it be in jest?'

'Nay, Adam,' said Richard, 'don't be angry with me because, being thus far successful, I rate my good fortune not quite so rapturously as perhaps you do, who have missed the luck of it. Your philosophy should tell you that the object which we attain, or are sure of attaining, loses, perhaps, even by that very certainty, a little of the extravagant and ideal value which attached to it while the object of feverish hopes and aguish fears. But for all that I cannot live without my sweet Menie. I would wed her to-morrow, with all my soul, without thinking a minute on the clog which so early a marriage would fasten on our heels. But to spend two additional years in this infernal wilderness, cruising after crowns and half-crowns, when worse men are making lacs and crores of rupees—it is a sad falling off, Adam. Counsel me, my friend; can you not suggest some mode of getting off from these two years of destined dullness?'

'Not I,' replied Hartley, scarce repressing his displeasure; 'and if I could induce Dr. Gray to dispense with so reasonable a condition, I should be very sorry to do so. You are but twenty-one, and if such a period of probation was, in the doctor's prudence, judged necessary for me, who am full two years older, I have no idea that he will dispense with it in yours.'

'Perhaps not,' replied Middlemas; 'but do you not think that these two, or call them three, years of probation had better be spent in India, where much may be done in a little while, than here, where nothing can be done save just enough to get salt to our broth, or broth to our salt? Methinks I have a natural turn for India, and so I ought. My father was

a soldier, by the conjecture of all who saw him, and gave me a love of the sword, and an arm to use one. My mother's father was a rich trafficker, who loved wealth, I warrant me, and knew how to get it. This petty two hundred a-year, with its miserable and precarious possibilities, to be shared with the old gentleman, sounds in the ears of one like me, who have the world for the winning, and a sword to cut my way through it, like something little better than a decent kind of beggary. Menie is in herself a gem — a diamond — I admit it. But then one would not set such a precious jewel in lead or copper, but in pure gold — ay, and add a circlet of brilliants to set it off with. Be a good fellow, Adam, and undertake the setting my project in proper colours before the doctor. I am sure the wisest thing for him and Menie both is to permit me to spend this short time of probation in the land of cowries. I am sure my heart will be there at any rate, and while I am bleeding some bumpkin for an inflammation, I shall be in fancy relieving some nabob or rajahpoot of his plethora of wealth. Come, will you assist — will you be auxiliary? Ten chances but you plead your own cause, man, for I may be brought up by a sabre or a bow-string before I make my pack up; then your road to Menie will be free and open, and, as you will be possessed of the situation of comforter *ex officio*, you may take her "with the tear in her ee," as old saws advise.

'Mr. Richard Middlemas,' said Hartley, 'I wish it were possible for me to tell you, in the few words which I intend to bestow on you, whether I pity you or despise you the most. Heaven has placed happiness, competence, and content within your power, and you are willing to cast them away to gratify ambition and avarice. Were I to give an advice on this subject, either to Dr. Gray or his daughter, it would be to break off all connexion with a man who, however clever by nature, may soon show himself a fool, and however honestly brought up, may also, upon temptation, prove himself a villain. You may lay aside the sneer which is designed to be a sarcastic smile. I will not attempt to do this, because I am convinced that my advice would be of no use, unless it could come unattended with suspicion of my motives. I will hasten my departure from this house, that we may not meet again; and I will leave it to God Almighty to protect honesty and innocence against the dangers which must attend vanity and folly.' So saying, he turned contemptuously from the youthful votary of ambition, and left the garden.

'Stop,' said Middlemas, struck with the picture which had been held up to his conscience — 'stop, Adam Hartley, and I will confess to you ——' But his words were uttered in a faint and hesitating manner, and either never reached Hartley's ear or failed in changing his purpose of departure.

When he was out of the garden, Middlemas began to recall his usual boldness of disposition. 'Had he stayed a moment longer,' he said, 'I would have turned Papist, and made him my ghostly confessor. The yeomanly churl! I would give something to know how he has got such a hank over me. What are Menie Gray's engagements to him? She has given him his answer, and what right has he to come betwixt her and me? If old Monçada had done a grandfather's duty, and made suitable settlements on me, this plan of marrying the sweet girl and settling here in her native place might have done well enough. But to live the life of the poor drudge her father—to be at the command and call of every boor for twenty miles round!—why, the labours of a higgler, who travels scores of miles to barter pins, ribands, snuff, and tobacco against the housewife's private stock of eggs, mort-skins, and tallow, is more profitable, less laborious, and faith, I think, equally respectable. No—no, unless I can find wealth nearer home, I will seek it where every one can have it for the gathering; and so I will down to the Swan Inn and hold a final consultation with my friend.'

CHAPTER V

THE friend whom Middlemas expected to meet at the Swan was a person already mentioned in this history by the name of Tom Hillary, bred an attorney's clerk in the ancient town of Novum Castrum, *doctus utriusque juris*, as far as a few months in the service of Mr. Lawford, town-clerk of Middlemas, could render him so. The last mention that we made of this gentleman was when his gold-laced hat veiled its splendour before the fresher-mounted beavers of the 'prentices of Dr. Gray. That was now about five years since, and it was within six months that he had made his appearance in Middlemas, a very different sort of personage from that which he seemed at his departure.

He was now called Captain; his dress was regimental, and his language martial. He seemed to have plenty of cash, for he not only, to the great surprise of the parties, paid certain old debts which he had left unsettled behind him, and that notwithstanding his having, as his old practice told him, a good defence of prescription, but even sent the minister a guinea to the assistance of the parish poor. These acts of justice and benevolence were bruited abroad greatly to the honour of one who, so long absent, had neither forgotten his just debts nor hardened his heart against the cries of the needy. His merits were thought the higher when it was understood he had served the Honourable East India Company—that wonderful company of merchants, who may indeed, with the strictest propriety, be termed princes. It was about the middle of the 18th century, and the directors in Leadenhall Street were silently laying the foundation of that immense empire which afterwards rose like an exhalation, and now astonishes Europe, as well as Asia, with its formidable extent and stupendous strength. Britain had now begun to lend a wondering ear to the account of battles fought and cities won in the East;

and was surprised by the return of individuals who had left their native country as adventurers, but now reappeared there surrounded by Oriental wealth and Oriental luxury, which dimmed even the splendour of the most wealthy of the British nobility. In this new-found El Dorado, Hillary had, it seems, been a labourer, and, if he told truth, to some purpose, though he was far from having completed the harvest which he meditated. He spoke, indeed, of making investments, and, as a mere matter of fancy, he consulted his old master, Clerk Lawford, concerning the purchase of a moorland farm of three thousand acres, for which he would be content to give three or four thousand guineas, providing the game was plenty and the trouting in the brook such as had been represented by advertisement. But he did not wish to make any extensive landed purchase at present. It was necessary to keep up his interest in Leadenhall Street; and in that view, it would be impolitic to part with his India stock and India bonds. In short, it was folly to think of settling on a poor thousand or twelve hundred a-year, when one was in the prime of life, and had no liver complaint; and so he was determined to double the Cape once again ere he retired to the chimney-corner for life. All he wished was, to pick up a few clever fellows for his regiment, or rather for his own company; and as in all his travels he had never seen finer fellows than about Middlemas, he was willing to give them the preference in completing his levy. In fact, it was making men of them at once, for a few white faces never failed to strike terror into these black rascals; and then, not to mention the good things that were going at the storming of a pettah or the plundering of a pagoda, most of these tawny dogs carried so much treasure about their persons that a won battle was equal to a mine of gold to the victors.

The natives of Middlemas listened to the noble captain's marvels with different feelings, as their temperaments were saturnine or sanguine. But none could deny that such things had been; and as the narrator was known to be a bold, dashing fellow, possessed of some abilities, and, according to the general opinion, not likely to be withheld by any peculiar scruples of conscience, there was no giving any good reason why Hillary should not have been as successful as others in the field which India, agitated as it was by war and intestine disorders, seemed to offer to every enterprising adventurer. He was accordingly received by his old acquaintances at Middle-

mas rather with the respect due to his supposed wealth than in a manner corresponding with his former humble pretensions.

Some of the notables of the village did indeed keep aloof. Among these, the chief was Dr. Gray, who was an enemy to everything that approached to fanfaronade, and knew enough of the world to lay it down as a sort of general rule that he who talks a great deal of fighting is seldom a brave soldier, and he who always speaks about wealth is seldom a rich man at bottom. Clerk Lawford was also shy, notwithstanding his communings with Hillary upon the subject of his intended purchase. The coolness of the captain's old employer towards him was by some supposed to arise out of certain circumstances attending their former connexion; but as the clerk himself never explained what these were, it is unnecessary to make any conjectures upon the subject.

Richard Middlemas very naturally renewed his intimacy with his former comrade, and it was from Hillary's conversation that he had adopted the enthusiasm respecting India which we have heard him express. It was indeed impossible for a youth at once inexperienced in the world and possessed of a most sanguine disposition to listen without sympathy to the glowing descriptions of Hillary, who, though only a recruiting captain, had all the eloquence of a recruiting sergeant. Palaces rose like mushrooms in his descriptions; groves of lofty trees and aromatic shrubs, unknown to the chilly soils of Europe, were tenanted by every object of the chase, from the royal tiger down to the jackall. The luxuries of a natch, and the peculiar Oriental beauty of the enchantresses who perfumed their voluptuous Eastern domes for the pleasure of the haughty English conquerors, were no less attractive than the battles and sieges on which the captain at other times expatiated. Not a stream did he mention but flowed over sands of gold, and not a palace that was inferior to those of the celebrated Fata Morgana. His descriptions seemed steeped in odours, and his every phrase perfumed in ottar of roses. The interviews at which these descriptions took place often ended in a bottle of choicer wine than the Swan Inn afforded, with some other appendages of the table, which the captain, who was a *bon-vivant*, had procured from Edinburgh. From this good cheer Middlemas was doomed to retire to the homely evening meal of his master, where not all the simple beauties of Menie were able to overcome his disgust at the coarseness of the provisions, or his unwillingness to answer questions concerning the

diseases of the wretched peasants who were subjected to his inspection.

Richard's hopes of being acknowledged by his father had long since vanished, and the rough repulse and subsequent neglect on the part of Monçada had satisfied him that his grandfather was inexorable, and that neither then nor at any future time did he mean to realise the visions which Nurse Jamieson's splendid figments had encouraged him to entertain. Ambition, however, was not lulled to sleep, though it was no longer nourished by the same hopes which had at first awakened it. The Indian captain's lavish oratory supplied the themes which had been at first derived from the legends of the nursery; the exploits of a Lawrence and a Clive, as well as the magnificent opportunities of acquiring wealth to which these exploits opened the road, disturbed the slumbers of the young adventurer. There was nothing to counteract these except his love for Menie Gray and the engagements into which it had led him. But his addresses had been paid to Menie as much for the gratification of his vanity as from any decided passion for that innocent and guileless being. He was desirous of carrying off the prize for which Hartley, whom he never loved, had the courage to contend with him. Then Menie Gray had been beheld with admiration by men his superiors in rank and fortune, but with whom his ambition incited him to dispute the prize. No doubt, though urged to play the gallant at first rather from vanity than any other cause, the frankness and modesty with which his suit was admitted made their natural impression on his heart. He was grateful to the beautiful creature who acknowledged the superiority of his person and accomplishments, and fancied himself as devotedly attached to her as her personal charms and mental merits would have rendered any one who was less vain or selfish than her lover. Still his passion for the surgeon's daughter ought not, he prudentially determined, to bear more than its due weight in a case so very important as the determining his line of life; and this he smoothed over to his conscience by repeating to himself that Menie's interest was as essentially concerned as his own in postponing their marriage to the establishment of his fortune. How many young couples had been ruined by a premature union!

The contemptuous conduct of Hartley in their last interview had done something to shake his comrade's confidence in the truth of this reasoning, and to lead him to suspect that he

was playing a very sordid and unmanly part in trifling with the happiness of this amiable and unfortunate young woman. It was in this doubtful humour that he repaired to the Swan Inn, where he was anxiously expected by his friend the captain.

When they were comfortably seated over a bottle of Paxarete, Middlemas began, with characteristical caution, to sound his friend about the ease or difficulty with which an individual, desirous of entering the Company's service, might have an opportunity of getting a commission. If Hillary had answered truly, he would have replied that it was extremely easy; for, at that time, the East India service presented no charms to that superior class of people who have since struggled for admittance under its banners. But the worthy captain replied that, though in the general case it might be difficult for a young man to obtain a commission without serving for some years as a cadet, yet, under his own protection, a young man entering his regiment, and fitted for such a situation, might be sure of an ensigncy, if not a lieutenancy, as soon as ever they set foot in India. 'If you, my dear fellow,' continued he, extending his hand to Middlemas, 'would think of changing sheep-head broth and haggis for mullagatawny and curry, I can only say that, though it is indispensable that you should enter the service at first simply as a cadet, yet, by —, you should live like a brother on the passage with me; and no sooner were we through the surf at Madras than I would put you in the way of acquiring both wealth and glory. You have, I think, some trifle of money — a couple of thousands or so?'

'About a thousand or twelve hundred,' said Richard, affecting the indifference of his companion, but feeling privately humbled by the scantiness of his resources.

'It is quite as much as you will find necessary for the outfit and passage,' said his adviser; 'and, indeed, if you had not a farthing, it would be the same thing; for if I once say to a friend, "I'll help you," Tom Hillary is not the man to start for fear of the cowries. However, it is as well you have something of a capital of your own to begin upon.'

'Yes,' replied the proselyte. 'I should not like to be a burden on any one. I have some thoughts, to tell you the truth, to marry before I leave Britain; and in that case, you know, cash will be necessary, whether my wife goes out with us or remains behind till she hear how luck goes with me. So, after all, I may have to borrow a few hundreds of you.'

'What the devil is that you say, Dick, about marrying and giving in marriage?' replied his friend. 'What can put it into the head of a gallant young fellow like you, just rising twenty-one, and six feet high on your stocking-soles, to make a slave of yourself for life? No—no, Dick, that will never do. Remember the old song—

Bachelor Bluff, bachelor Bluff,
Hey for a heart that's rugged and tough !'

'Ay—ay, that sounds very well,' replied Middlemas; 'but then one must shake off a number of old recollections.'

'The sooner the better, Dick; old recollections are like old clothes, and should be sent off by wholesale: they only take up room in one's wardrobe, and it would be old-fashioned to wear them. But you look grave upon it. Who the devil is it has made such a hole in your heart?'

'Pshaw!' answered Middlemas, 'I'm sure you must remember—Menie—my master's daughter.'

'What, Miss Green, the old potter-carrier's daughter? A likely girl enough, I think.'

'My master is a surgeon,' said Richard, 'not an apothecary, and his name is Gray.'

'Ay—ay, Green or Gray—what does it signify? He sells his own drugs, I think, which we in the south call being a potter-carrier. The girl is a likely girl enough for a Scottish ball-room. But is she up to anything? Has she any *nous*?'

'Why, she is a sensible girl, save in loving me,' answered Richard; 'and that, as Benedict says, is no proof of her wisdom and no great argument of her folly.'

'But has she spirit—spunk—dash—a spice of the devil about her?'

'Not a pennyweight—the kindest, simplest, and most manageable of human beings,' answered the lover.

'She won't do, then,' said the monitor, in a decisive tone. 'I am sorry for it, Dick, but she will never do. There are some women in the world that can bear their share in the bustling life we live in India—ay, and I have known some of them drag forward husbands that would otherwise have stuck fast in the mud till the day of judgment. Heaven knows how they paid the turnpikes they pushed them through! But these were none of your simple Susans, that think their eyes are good for nothing but to look at their husbands, or their fingers but to sew baby-clothes. Depend on it, you must give

up your matrimony or your views of preferment. If you wilfully tie a clog round your throat, never think of running a race. But do not suppose that your breaking off with the lass will make any very terrible catastrophe. A scene there may be at parting; but you will soon forget her among the native girls, and she will fall in love with Mr. Tapeitout, the minister's assistant and successor. She is not goods for the Indian market, I assure you.'

Among the capricious weaknesses of humanity, that one is particularly remarkable which inclines us to esteem persons and things not by their real value, or even by our own judgment, so much as by the opinion of others, who are often very incompetent judges. Dick Middlemas had been urged forward in his suit to Menie Gray by his observing how much her partner, a booby laird, had been captivated by her; and she was now lowered in his esteem because an impudent, low-lived coxcomb had presumed to talk of her with disparagement. Either of these worthy gentlemen would have been as capable of enjoying the beauties of Homer as judging of the merits of Menie Gray.

Indeed, the ascendancy which this bold-talking, promise-making soldier had acquired over Dick Middlemas, wilful as he was in general, was of a despotic nature; because the captain, though greatly inferior in information and talent to the youth whose opinions he swayed, had skill in suggesting those tempting views of rank and wealth to which Richard's imagination had been from childhood most accessible. One promise he exacted from Middlemas, as a condition of the services which he was to render him: it was absolute silence on the subject of his destination for India, and the views upon which it took place. 'My recruits,' said the captain, 'have been all marched off for the dépôt at the Isle of Wight; and I want to leave Scotland, and particularly this little burgh, without being worried to death, of which I must despair, should it come to be known that I can provide young griffins, as we call them, with commissions. Gad, I should carry off all the first-born of Middlemas as cadets, and none are so scrupulous as I am about making promises. I am as trusty as a Trojan for that; and you know I cannot do that for every one which I would for an old friend like Dick Middlemas.'

Dick promised secrecy, and it was agreed that the two friends should not even leave the burgh in company, but that the captain should set off first, and his recruit should join him

at Edinburgh, where his enlistment might be attested; and then they were to travel together to town, and arrange matters for their Indian voyage.

Notwithstanding the definitive arrangement which was thus made for his departure, Middlemas thought from time to time with anxiety and regret about quitting Menie Gray, after the engagement which had passed between them. The resolution was taken, however; the blow was necessarily to be struck; and her ungrateful lover, long since determined against the life of domestic happiness which he might have enjoyed had his views been better regulated, was now occupied with the means, not indeed of breaking off with her entirely, but of postponing all thoughts of their union until the success of his expedition to India.

He might have spared himself all anxiety on this last subject. The wealth of that India to which he was bound would not have bribed Menie Gray to have left her father's roof against her father's commands; still less when, deprived of his two assistants, he must be reduced to the necessity of continued exertion in his declining life, and therefore might have accounted himself altogether deserted had his daughter departed from him at the same time. But though it would have been her unalterable determination not to accept any proposal of an immediate union of their fortunes, Menie could not, with all a lover's power of self-deception, succeed in persuading herself to be satisfied with Richard's conduct towards her. Modesty and a becoming pride prevented her from seeming to notice, but could not prevent her from bitterly feeling, that her lover was preferring the pursuits of ambition to the humble lot which he might have shared with her, and which promised content at least, if not wealth.

'If he had loved me as he pretended,' such was the unwilling conviction that rose on her mind, 'my father would surely not have ultimately refused him the same terms which he held out to Hartley. His objections would have given way to my happiness, nay, to Richard's importunities, which would have removed his suspicions of the unsettled cast of his disposition. But I fear — I fear Richard hardly thought the terms proposed were worthy of his acceptance. Would it not have been natural, too, that he should have asked me, engaged as we stand to each other, to have united our fate before his quitting Europe, when I might either have remained here with my father, or accompanied him to India, in quest of that fortune

which he is so eagerly pushing for? It would have been wrong — very wrong — in me to have consented to such a proposal, unless my father had authorised it; but surely it would have been natural that Richard should have offered it? Alas! men do not know how to love like women. Their attachment is only one of a thousand other passions and predilections: they are daily engaged in pleasures which blunt their feelings, and in business which distracts them. We — we sit at home to weep, and to think how coldly our affections are repaid!

The time was now arrived at which Richard Middlemas had a right to demand the property vested in the hands of the town-clerk and Doctor Gray. He did so, and received it accordingly. His late guardian naturally inquired what views he had formed in entering on life? The imagination of the ambitious aspirant saw in this simple question a desire, on the part of the worthy man, to offer, and perhaps press upon him, the same proposal which he had made to Hartley. He hastened, therefore, to answer drily, that he had some hopes held out to him which he was not at liberty to communicate; but that the instant he reached London he would write to the guardian of his youth and acquaint him with the nature of his prospects, which he was happy to say were rather of a pleasing character.

Gideon, who supposed that at this critical period of his life the father or grandfather of the young man might perhaps have intimated a disposition to open some intercourse with him, only replied, 'You have been the child of mystery, Richard; and as you came to me, so you leave me. Then I was ignorant from whence you came, and now I know not whither you are going. It is not, perhaps, a very favourable point in your horoscope that everything connected with you is a secret. But as I shall always think with kindness on him whom I have known so long, so when you remember the old man, you ought not to forget that he has done his duty to you to the extent of his means and power, and taught you that noble profession by means of which, wherever your lot casts you, you may always gain your bread, and alleviate, at the same time, the distresses of your fellow-creatures.' Middlemas was excited by the simple kindness of his master, and poured forth his thanks with the greater profusion, that he was free from the terror of the emblematical collar and chain, which a moment before seemed to glisten in the hand of his guardian, and gape to inclose his neck.

'One word more,' said Mr. Gray, producing a small ring-case. 'This valuable ring was forced upon me by your unfortunate mother. I have no right to it, having been amply paid for my services; and I only accepted it with the purpose of keeping it for you till this moment should arrive. It may be useful, perhaps, should there occur any question about your identity.'

'Thanks, once more, my more than father, for this precious relic, which may indeed be useful. You shall be repaid, if India has diamonds left.'

'India and diamonds!' said Gray. 'Is your head turned, child?'

'I mean,' stammered Middlemas, 'if London has any Indian diamonds.'

'Pooh! you foolish lad,' answered Gray, 'how should you buy diamonds, or what should I do with them, if you gave me ever so many? Get you gone with you while I am angry.' The tears were glistening in the old man's eyes. 'If I get pleased with you again, I shall not know how to part with you.'

The parting of Middlemas with poor Menie was yet more affecting. Her sorrow revived in his mind all the liveliness of a first love, and he redeemed his character for sincere attachment by not only imploring an instant union, but even going so far as to propose renouncing his more splendid prospects, and sharing Mr. Gray's humble toil, if by doing so he could secure his daughter's hand. But, though there was consolation in this testimony of her lover's faith, Menie Gray was not so unwise as to accept of sacrifices which might afterwards have been repented of.

'No, Richard,' she said, 'it seldom ends happily when people alter, in a moment of agitated feeling, plans which have been adopted under mature deliberation. I have long seen that your views were extended far beyond so humble a station as this place affords promise of. It is natural they should do so, considering that the circumstances of your birth seem connected with riches and with rank. Go, then, seek that riches and rank. It is possible your mind may be changed in the pursuit, and if so, think no more about Menie Gray. But if it should be otherwise, we may meet again, and do not believe for a moment that there can be a change in Menie Gray's feelings towards you.'

At this interview much more was said than it is necessary

to repeat, much more thought than was actually said. Nurse Jamieson, in whose chamber it took place, folded her 'bairns,' as she called them, in her arms, and declared that Heaven had made them for each other, and that she would not ask of Heaven to live beyond the day when she should see them bridegroom and bride.

At length it became necessary that the parting scene should end; and Richard Middlemas, mounting a horse which he had hired for the journey, set off for Edinburgh, to which metropolis he had already forwarded his heavy baggage. Upon the road the idea more than once occurred to him that even yet he had better return to Middlemas, and secure his happiness by uniting himself at once to Menie Gray and to humble competence. But from the moment that he rejoined his friend Hillary at their appointed place of rendezvous he became ashamed even to hint at any change of purpose; and his late excited feelings were forgotten, unless in so far as they confirmed his resolution that, as soon as he had attained a certain portion of wealth and consequence, he would haste to share them with Menie Gray. Yet his gratitude to her father did not appear to have slumbered, if we may judge from the gift of a very handsome cornelian seal, set in gold, and bearing engraved upon it gules, a lion rampant within a bordure or, which was carefully despatched to Stevenlaw's Land, Middlemas, with a suitable letter. Menie knew the handwriting, and watched her father's looks as he read it, thinking, perhaps, that it had turned on a different topic. Her father pshawed and poohed a good deal when he had finished the billet, and examined the seal.

'Dick Middlemas,' he said, 'is but a fool after all, Menie. I am sure I am not like to forget him, that he should send me a token of remembrance; and if he would be so absurd, could he not have sent me the improved lithotomical apparatus? And what have I, Gideon Gray, to do with the arms of my Lord Gray? No — no, my old silver stamp, with the double G upon it, will serve my turn. But put the bonny dye¹ away, Menie, my dear; it was kindly meant, at any rate.'

The reader cannot doubt that the seal was safely and carefully preserved.

¹ 'Pretty toy.'

CHAPTER VI

A lazar-house it seemed, wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased.

MILTON.

AFTER the captain had finished his business, amongst which he did not forget to have his recruit regularly attested as a candidate for glory in the service of the Honourable East India Company, the friends left Edinburgh. From thence they got a passage by sea to Newcastle, where Hillary had also some regimental affairs to transact before he joined his regiment. At Newcastle the captain had the good luck to find a small brig, commanded by an old acquaintance and schoolfellow, which was just about to sail for the Isle of Wight. 'I have arranged for our passage with him,' he said to Middlemas; 'for when you are at the depôt you can learn a little of your duty, which cannot be so well taught on board of ship, and then I will find it easier to have you promoted.'

'Do you mean,' said Richard, 'that I am to stay at the Isle of Wight all the time that you are jiggling it away in London?'

'Ay, indeed do I,' said his comrade, 'and it's best for you too; whatever business you have in London, I can do it for you as well or something better than yourself.'

'But I choose to transact my own business myself, Captain Hillary,' said Richard.

'Then you ought to have remained your own master, Mr. Cadet Middlemas. At present you are an enlisted recruit of the Honourable East India Company; I am your officer, and should you hesitate to follow me aboard, why, you foolish fellow, I could have you sent on board in handcuffs.'

This was jestingly spoken; but yet there was something in the tone which hurt Middlemas's pride and alarmed his fears. He had observed of late that his friend, especially when in company of others, talked to him with an air of command or superiority, difficult to be endured, and yet so closely allied to

the freedom often exercised betwixt two intimates, that he could not find any proper mode of rebuffing or resenting it. Such manifestations of authority were usually followed by an instant renewal of their intimacy; but in the present case that did not so speedily ensue.

Middlemas, indeed, consented to go with his companion to the Isle of Wight, perhaps because if he should quarrel with him the whole plan of his Indian voyage, and all the hopes built upon it, must fall to the ground. But he altered his purpose of entrusting his comrade with his little fortune, to lay out as his occasions might require, and resolved himself to overlook the expenditure of his money, which, in the form of Bank of England notes, was safely deposited in his travelling-trunk. Captain Hillary, finding that some hint he had thrown out on this subject was disregarded, appeared to think no more about it.

The voyage was performed with safety and celerity; and having coasted the shores of that beautiful island, which he who once sees never forgets, through whatever part of the world his future path may lead him, the vessel was soon anchored off the little town of Ryde; and, as the waves were uncommonly still, Richard felt the sickness diminish which, for a considerable part of the passage, had occupied his attention more than anything else.

The master of the brig, in honour to his passengers and affection to his old schoolfellow, had formed an awning upon deck, and proposed to have the pleasure of giving them a little treat before they left his vessel. Lobsouse, sea-pie, and other delicacies of a naval description had been provided in a quantity far disproportionate to the number of the guests. But the punch which succeeded was of excellent quality, and portentously strong. Captain Hillary pushed it round, and insisted upon his companion taking his full share in the merry bout, the rather that, as he facetiously said, there had been some dryness between them, which good liquor would be sovereign in removing. He renewed, with additional splendours, the various panoramic scenes of India and Indian adventures which had first excited the ambition of Middlemas, and assured him that, even if he should not be able to get him a commission instantly, yet a short delay would only give him time to become better acquainted with his military duties; and Middlemas was too much elevated by the liquor he had drank to see any difficulty which could oppose itself to his fortunes. Whether

those who shared in the computation were more seasoned toppers, whether Middlemas drank more than they, or whether, as he himself afterwards suspected, his cup had been drugged, like those of King Duncan's body-guard, it is certain that on this occasion he passed, with unusual rapidity, through all the different phases of the respectable state of drunkenness—laughed, sung, whooped, and hallooed, was maudlin in his fondness and frantic in his wrath, and at length fell into a fast and imperturbable sleep.

The effect of the liquor displayed itself, as usual, in a hundred wild dreams of parched deserts, and of serpents whose bite inflicted the most intolerable thirst, of the suffering of the Indian on the death-stake, and the torments of the infernal regions themselves, when at length he awakened, and it appeared that the latter vision was in fact realised. The sounds which had at first influenced his dreams, and at length broken his slumbers, were of the most horrible as well as the most melancholy description. They came from the ranges of pallet-beds which were closely packed together in a species of military hospital, where a burning fever was the prevalent complaint. Many of the patients were under the influence of a high delirium, during which they shouted, shrieked, laughed, blasphemed, and uttered the most horrible imprecations. Others, sensible of their condition, bewailed it with low groans and some attempts at devotion, which showed their ignorance of the principles, and even the forms, of religion. Those who were convalescent talked ribaldry in a loud tone, or whispered to each other in cant language, upon schemes which, as far as a passing phrase could be understood by a novice, had relation to violent and criminal exploits.

Richard Middlemas's astonishment was equal to his horror. He had but one advantage over the poor wretches with whom he was classed, and it was in enjoying the luxury of a pallet to himself, most of the others being occupied by two unhappy beings. He saw no one who appeared to attend to the wants, or to heed the complaints, of the wretches around him, or to whom he could offer any appeal against his present situation. He looked for his clothes, that he might arise and extricate himself from this den of horrors; but his clothes were nowhere to be seen, nor did he see his portmanteau or sea-chest. It was much to be apprehended he would never see them more.

Then, but too late, he remembered the insinuations which

had passed current respecting his friend the captain, who was supposed to have been discharged by Mr. Lawford on account of some breach of trust in the town-clerk's service. But that he should have trepanned the friend who had reposed his whole confidence in him, that he should have plundered him of his fortune, and placed him in this house of pestilence, with the hope that death might stifle his tongue, were iniquities not to have been anticipated, even if the worst of these reports were true.

But Middlemas resolved not to be awanting to himself. This place must be visited by some officer, military or medical, to whom he would make an appeal, and alarm his fears at least, if he could not awaken his conscience. While he revolved these distracting thoughts, tormented at the same time by a burning thirst which he had no means of satisfying, he endeavoured to discover if, among those stretched upon the pallets nearest him, he could not discern some one likely to enter into conversation with him, and give him some information about the nature and customs of this horrid place. But the bed nearest him was occupied by two fellows who, although, to judge from their gaunt cheeks, hollow eyes, and ghastly looks, they were apparently recovering from the disease, and just rescued from the jaws of death, were deeply engaged in endeavouring to cheat each other of a few halfpence at a game of cribbage, mixing the terms of the game with oaths not loud but deep; each turn of luck being hailed by the winner as well as the loser with execrations, which seemed designed to blight both body and soul, now used as the language of triumph, and now as reproaches against fortune.

Next to the gamblers was a pallet occupied indeed by two bodies, but only one of which was living: the other sufferer had been recently relieved from his agony.

'He is dead — he is dead!' said the wretched survivor.

'Then do you die too, and be d—d,' answered one of the players, 'and then there will be a pair of you, as Pugg says.'

'I tell you he is growing stiff and cold,' said the poor wretch: 'the dead is no bedfellow for the living. For God's sake, help to rid me of the corpse.'

'Ay, and get the credit of having *done* him — as may be the case with yourself, friend, for he had some two or three hoggs about him —'

'You know you took the last rap from his breeches-pocket not an hour ago,' expostulated the poor convalescent. 'But

help me to take the body out of the bed, and I will not tell the jigger-dubber that you have been beforehand with him.'

'You tell the jigger-dubber!' answered the cribbage-player. 'Such another word and I will twist your head round till your eyes look at the drummer's handwriting on your back. Hold your peace, and don't bother our game with your gammon, or I will make you as mute as your bedfellow.'

The unhappy wretch, exhausted, sunk back beside his hideous companion, and the usual jargon of the game, interlarded with execrations, went on as before.

From this specimen of the most obdurate indifference, contrasted with the last excess of misery, Middlemas became satisfied how little could be made of an appeal to the humanity of his fellow-sufferers. His heart sunk within him, and the thoughts of the happy and peaceful home which he might have called his own arose before his overheated fancy with a vividness of perception that bordered upon insanity. He saw before him the rivulet which wanders through the burgh muir of Middlemas, where he had so often set little mills for the amusement of Menie while she was a child. One draught of it would have been worth all the diamonds of the East, which of late he had worshipped with such devotion; but that draught was denied to him as to Tantalus.

Rallying his senses from this passing illusion, and knowing enough of the practice of the medical art to be aware of the necessity of preventing his ideas from wandering, if possible, he endeavoured to recollect that he was a surgeon, and, after all, should not have the extreme fear for the interior of a military hospital which its horrors might inspire into strangers to the profession. But, though he strove by such recollections to rally his spirits, he was not the less aware of the difference betwixt the condition of a surgeon who might have attended such a place in the course of his duty and a poor inhabitant who was at once a patient and a prisoner.

A footstep was now heard in the apartment, which seemed to silence all the varied sounds of woe that filled it. The cribbage-party hid their cards and ceased their oaths; other wretches, whose complaints had arisen to frenzy, left off their wild exclamations and entreaties for assistance. Agony softened her shriek, Insanity hushed its senseless clamours, and even Death seemed desirous to stifle his parting groan in the presence of Captain Seelencoop. This official was the superintendent, or, as the miserable inhabitants termed him, the governor, of

the hospital. He had all the air of having been originally a turnkey in some ill-regulated jail — a stout, short, bandy-legged man, with one eye, and a double portion of ferocity in that which remained. He wore an old-fashioned tarnished uniform, which did not seem to have been made for him; and the voice in which this minister of humanity addressed the sick was that of a boatswain shouting in the midst of a storm. He had pistols and a cutlass in his belt; for, his mode of administration being such as provoked even hospital patients to revolt, his life had been more than once in danger amongst them. He was followed by two assistants, who carried handcuffs and strait-jackets.

As Seelencoopers made his rounds, complaint and pain were hushed, and the flourish of the bamboo which he bore in his hand seemed powerful as the wand of a magician to silence all complaint and remonstrance.

‘I tell you the meat is as sweet as a nosegay; and for the bread, it’s good enough, and too good, for a set of lubbers that lie shamming Abraham, and consuming the Right Honourable Company’s victuals. I don’t speak to them that are really sick, for God knows I am always for humanity.’

‘If that be the case, sir,’ said Richard Middlemas, whose lair the captain had approached, while he was thus answering the low and humble complaints of those by whose bedside he passed — ‘if that be the case, sir, I hope your humanity will make you attend to what I say.’

‘And who the devil are you?’ said the governor, turning on him his single eye of fire, while a sneer gathered on his harsh features, which were so well qualified to express it.

‘My name is Middlemas; I come from Scotland, and have been sent here by some strange mistake. I am neither a private soldier nor am I indisposed, more than by the heat of this cursed place.’

‘Why then, friend, all I have to ask you is, whether you are an attested recruit or not?’

‘I was attested at Edinburgh,’ said Middlemas, ‘but ——’

‘But what the devil would you have, then? You are enlisted. The captain and the doctor sent you here; surely they know best whether you are private or officer, sick or well.’

‘But I was promised,’ said Middlemas — ‘promised by Tom Hillary ——’

‘Promised, were you? Why, there is not a man here that has not been promised something by somebody or another, or

perhaps has promised something to himself. This is the land of promise, my smart fellow, but you know it is India that must be the land of performance. So good morning to you. The doctor will come his rounds presently, and put you all to rights.'

'Stay but one moment — one moment only: I have been robbed.'

'Robbed! look you there now,' said the governor, 'everybody that comes here has been robbed. Egad, I am the luckiest fellow in Europe: other people in my line have only thieves and blackguards upon their hands; but none come to my ken but honest, decent, unfortunate gentlemen that have been robbed!'

'Take care how you treat this so lightly, sir,' said Middlemas; 'I have been robbed of a thousand pounds.'

Here Governor Seelencoop's gravity was totally overcome, and his laugh was echoed by several of the patients, either because they wished to curry favor with the superintendent or from the feeling which influences evil spirits to rejoice in the tortures of those who are sent to share their agony.

'A thousand pounds!' exclaimed Captain Seelencoop, as he recovered his breath. 'Come, that's a good one — I like a fellow that does not make two bites of a cherry; why, there is not a cull in the ken that pretends to have lost more than a few hoggs, and here is a servant to the Honourable Company that has been robbed of a thousand pounds! Well done, Mr. Tom of Ten Thousand, you're a credit to the house, and to the service, and so good morning to you.'

He passed on, and Richard, starting up in a storm of anger and despair, found, as he would have called after him, that his voice, betwixt thirst and agitation, refused its office. 'Water — water!' he said, laying hold, at the same time, of one of the assistants who followed Seelencoop by the sleeve. The fellow looked carelessly round; there was a jug stood by the side of the cribbage-players, which he reached to Middlemas, bidding him, 'Drink and be d—d.'

The man's back was no sooner turned than the gamester threw himself from his own bed into that of Middlemas, and grasping firm hold of the arm of Richard, ere he could carry the vessel to his head, swore he should not have his booze. It may be readily conjectured that the pitcher thus anxiously and desperately reclaimed contained something better than the pure element. In fact, a large proportion of it was gin. The

jug was broken in the struggle and the liquor spilt. Middlemas dealt a blow to the assailant, which was amply and heartily repaid, and a combat would have ensued, but for the interference of the superintendent and his assistants, who, with a dexterity that showed them well acquainted with such emergencies, clapped a strait-waistcoat upon each of the antagonists. Richard's efforts at remonstrance only procured him a blow from Captain Seelencoper's rattan, and a tender admonition to hold his tongue if he valued a whole skin.

Irritated at once by sufferings of the mind and of the body, tormented by raging thirst, and by the sense of his own dreadful situation, the mind of Richard Middlemas seemed to be on the point of becoming unsettled. He felt an insane desire to imitate and reply to the groans, oaths, and ribaldry which, as soon as the superintendent quitted the hospital, echoed around him. He longed, though he struggled against the impulse, to vie in curses with the reprobate, and in screams with the maniac. But his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, his mouth itself seemed choked with ashes; there came upon him a dimness of sight, a rushing sound in his ears, and the powers of life were for a time suspended.

CHAPTER VII

A wise physician, skill'd our wounds to heal,
Is more than armies to the common weal.

POPE'S *Homer*.

AS Middlemas returned to his senses, he was sensible that his blood felt more cool, that the feverish throb of his pulsation was diminished, that the ligatures on his person were removed, and his lungs performed their functions more freely. One assistant was binding up a vein, from which a considerable quantity of blood had been taken ; another, who had just washed the face of the patient, was holding aromatic vinegar to his nostrils. As he began to open his eyes, the person who had just completed the bandage said in Latin, but in a very low tone, and without raising his head, '*Annon sis Ricardus ille Middlemas, ex civitate Middlemassiense ? Responde in lingua Latina.*'

'*Sum ille miserrimus,*' replied Richard, again shutting his eyes ; for, strange as it may seem, the voice of his comrade Adam Hartley, though his presence might be of so much consequence in this emergency, conveyed a pang to his wounded pride. He was conscious of unkindly, if not hostile, feelings towards his old companion ; he remembered the tone of superiority which he used to assume over him, and thus to lie stretched at his feet, and in a manner at his mercy, aggravated his distress, by the feelings of the dying chieftain, '*Earl Percy sees my fall.*' This was, however, too unreasonable an emotion to subsist above a minute. In the next, he availed himself of the Latin language, with which both were familiar, for in that time the medical studies at the celebrated University of Edinburgh were, in a great measure, conducted in Latin, to tell in a few words his own folly, and the villainy of Hillary.

'I must be gone instantly,' said Hartley. 'Take courage ; I trust to be able to assist you. In the meantime, take food and physic from none but my servant, who you see holds the

sponge in his hand. You are in a place where a man's life has been taken for the sake of his gold sleeve-buttons.'

'Stay yet a moment,' said Middlemas. 'Let me remove this temptation from my dangerous neighbours.'

He drew a small packet from his under waistcoat, and put it into Hartley's hands.

'If I die,' he said, 'be my heir. You deserve her better than I.'

All answer was prevented by the hoarse voice of Seelencoper.

'Well, doctor, will you carry through your patient?'

'Symptoms are dubious yet,' said the doctor. 'That was an alarming swoon. You must have him carried into the private ward, and my young man shall attend him.'

'Why, if you command it, doctor, needs must; but I can tell you there is a man we both know that has a thousand reasons at least for keeping him in the public ward.'

'I know nothing of your thousand reasons,' said Hartley; 'I can only tell you that this young fellow is as well-limbed and likely a lad as the Company have among their recruits. It is my business to save him for their service, and if he dies by your neglecting what I direct, depend upon it I will not allow the blame to lie at my door. I will tell the General the charge I had given you.'

'The General!' said Seelencoper, much embarrassed. 'Tell the General? Ay, about his health. But you will not say anything about what he may have said in his light-headed fits? My eyes! if you listen to what feverish patients say when the tantivy is in their brain, your back will soon break with tale-bearing, for I will warrant you plenty of them to carry.'

'Captain Seelencoper,' said the doctor, 'I do not meddle with your department in the hospital. My advice to you is, not to trouble yourself with mine. I suppose, as I have a commission in the service, and have besides a regular diploma as a physician, I know when my patient is light-headed or otherwise. So do you let the man be carefully looked after, at your peril.'

Thus saying, he left the hospital, but not till, under pretext of again consulting the pulse, he pressed the patient's hand, as if to assure him once more of his exertions for his liberation.

'My eyes!' muttered Seelencoper, 'this cockerel crows gallant, to come from a Scotch roost; but I would know well enough how to fetch the youngster off the perch, if it were not for the cure he has done on the General's pickaninnies.'

Enough of this fell on Richard's ear to suggest hopes of deliverance, which were increased when he was shortly afterwards removed to a separate ward, a place much more decent in appearance, and inhabited only by two patients, who seemed petty officers. Although sensible that he had no illness save that weakness which succeeds violent agitation, he deemed it wisest to suffer himself still to be treated as a patient, in consideration that he should thus remain under his comrade's superintendence. Yet, while preparing to avail himself of Hartley's good offices, the prevailing reflection of his secret bosom was the ungrateful sentiment, 'Had Heaven no other means of saving me than by the hands of him I like least on the face of the earth?'

Meanwhile, ignorant of the ungrateful sentiments of his comrade, and indeed wholly indifferent how he felt towards him, Hartley proceeded in doing him such service as was in his power, without any other object than the discharge of his own duty as a man and as a Christian. The manner in which he became qualified to render his comrade assistance requires some short explanation.

Our story took place at a period when the Directors of the East India Company, with that hardy and persevering policy which has raised to such a height the British Empire in the East, had determined to send a large reinforcement of European troops to the support of their power in India, then threatened by the kingdom of Mysore, of which the celebrated Hyder Ali had usurped the government, after dethroning his master. Considerable difficulty was found in obtaining recruits for that service. Those who might have been otherwise disposed to be soldiers were afraid of the climate, and of the species of banishment which the engagement implied; and doubted also how far the engagements of the Company might be faithfully observed towards them, when they were removed from the protection of the British laws. For these and other reasons, the military service of the king was preferred, and that of the Company could only procure the worst recruits, although their zealous agents scrupled not to employ the worst means. Indeed, the practice of kidnapping, or crimping, as it is technically called, was at that time general, whether for the colonies or even for the king's troops; and as the agents employed in such transactions must be of course entirely unscrupulous, there was not only much villainy committed in the direct prosecution of the trade, but it gave rise incidentally to re-

markable cases of robbery, and even murder. Such atrocities were, of course, concealed from the authorities for whom the levies were made, and the necessity of obtaining soldiers made men whose conduct was otherwise unexceptionable cold in looking closely into the mode in which their recruiting service was conducted.

The principal depôt of the troops which were by these means assembled was in the Isle of Wight, where, the season proving unhealthy, and the men themselves being many of them of a bad habit of body, a fever of a malignant character broke out amongst them, and speedily crowded with patients the military hospital, of which Mr. Seelencoper, himself an old and experienced crimp and kidnapper, had obtained the superintendence. Irregularities began to take place also among the soldiers who remained healthy, and the necessity of subjecting them to some discipline before they sailed was so evident, that several officers of the Company's naval service expressed their belief that otherwise there would be dangerous mutinies on the passage.

To remedy the first of these evils, the Court of Directors sent down to the island several of their medical servants, amongst whom was Hartley, whose qualifications had been amply certified by a medical board, before which he had passed an examination, besides his possessing a diploma from the University of Edinburgh as M.D.

To enforce the discipline of their soldiers, the Court committed full power to one of their own body, General Witherington. The General was an officer who had distinguished himself highly in their service. He had returned from India five or six years before, with a large fortune, which he had rendered much greater by an advantageous marriage with a rich heiress. The General and his lady went little into society, but seemed to live entirely for their infant family, those in number being three, two boys and a girl. Although he had retired from the service, he willingly undertook the temporary charge committed to him, and taking a house at a considerable distance from the town of Ryde, he proceeded to enrol the troops into separate bodies, appoint officers of capacity to each, and, by regular training and discipline, gradually to bring them into something resembling good order. He heard their complaints of ill-usage in the articles of provisions and appointments, and did them upon all occasions the strictest justice, save that he was never known to restore one recruit to his freedom from the service,

however unfairly or even illegally his attestation might have been obtained.

'It is none of my business,' said General Witherington, 'how you became soldiers, — soldiers I found you, and soldiers I will leave you. But I will take especial care that, as soldiers you shall have everything, to a penny or a pin's head, that you are justly entitled to.' He went to work without fear or favour, reported many abuses to the Board of Directors, had several officers, commissaries, etc., removed from the service, and made his name as great a terror to the speculators at home as it had been to the enemies of Britain and Hindostan.

Captain Seelencoop and his associates in the hospital department heard and trembled, fearing that their turn should come next; but the General, who elsewhere examined all with his own eyes, showed a reluctance to visit the hospital in person. Public report industriously imputed this to fear of infection. Such was certainly the motive; though it was not fear for his own safety that influenced General Witherington, but he dreaded lest he should carry the infection home to the nursery, on which he doated. The alarm of his lady was yet more unreasonably sensitive: she would scarcely suffer the children to walk abroad, if the wind but blew from the quarter where the hospital was situated.

But Providence baffles the precautions of mortals. In a walk across the fields, chosen as the most sheltered and sequestered, the children, with their train of Eastern and European attendants, met a woman who carried a child that was recovering from the small-pox. The anxiety of the father, joined to some religious scruples on the mother's part, had postponed inoculation, which was then scarcely come into general use. The infection caught like a quick-match, and ran like wildfire through all those in the family who had not previously had the disease. One of the General's children, the second boy, died, and two of the ayahs, or black female servants, had the same fate. The hearts of the father and mother would have been broken for the child they had lost, had not their grief been suspended by anxiety for the fate of those who lived, and who were confessed to be in imminent danger. They were like persons distracted, as the symptoms of the poor patients appeared gradually to resemble more nearly that of the child already lost.

While the parents were in this agony of apprehension, the General's principal servant, a native of Northumberland like himself, informed him one morning that there was a young

man from the same county among the hospital doctors who had publicly blamed the mode of treatment observed towards the patients, and spoken of another which he had seen practised with eminent success.

'Some impudent quack,' said the General, 'who would force himself into business by bold assertions. Doctor Tourniquet and Doctor Lancelot are men of high reputation.'

'Do not mention their reputation,' said the mother, with a mother's impatience; 'did they not let my sweet Reuben die? What avails the reputation of the physician when the patient perisheth?'

'If his honour would but see Doctor Hartley,' said Winter, turning half towards the lady, and then turning back again to his master. 'He is a very decent young man, who, I am sure, never expected what he said to reach your honour's ears — and he is a native of Northumberland.'

'Send a servant with a led horse,' said the General; 'let the young man come hither instantly.'

It is well known that the ancient mode of treating the small-pox was to refuse to the patient everything which nature urged him to desire; and, in particular, to confine him to heated rooms, beds loaded with blankets, and spiced wine, when nature called for cold water and fresh air. A different mode of treatment had of late been adventured upon by some practitioners, who preferred reason to authority, and Gideon Gray had followed it for several years with extraordinary success.

When General Witherington saw Hartley, he was startled at his youth; but when he heard him modestly, but with confidence, state the difference of the two modes of treatment, and the *rationale* of his practice, he listened with the most serious attention. So did his lady, her streaming eyes turning from Hartley to her husband, as if to watch what impression the arguments of the former were making upon the latter. General Witherington was silent for a few minutes after Hartley had finished his exposition, and seemed buried in profound reflection. 'To treat a fever,' he said, 'in a manner which tends to produce one seems indeed to be adding fuel to fire.'

'It is — it is,' said the lady. 'Let us trust this young man, General Witherington. We shall at least give our darlings the comforts of the fresh air and cold water for which they are pining.'

But the General remained undecided. 'Your reasoning,' he said to Hartley, 'seems plausible; but still it is only hypothesis.'

What can you show to support your theory in opposition to the general practice ?'

'My own observation,' replied the young man. 'Here is a memorandum-book of medical cases which I have witnessed. It contains twenty cases of small-pox, of which eighteen were recoveries.'

'And the two others ?' said the General.

'Terminated fatally,' replied Hartley; 'we can as yet but partially disarm this scourge of the human race.'

'Young man,' continued the General, 'were I to say that a thousand gold mohurs were yours in case my children live under your treatment, what have you to peril in exchange ?'

'My reputation,' answered Hartley, firmly.

'And you could warrant on your reputation the recovery of your patients ?'

'God forbid I should be presumptuous ! But I think I could warrant my using those means which, with God's blessing, afford the fairest chance of a favourable result.'

'Enough — you are modest and sensible, as well as bold, and I will trust you.'

The lady, on whom Hartley's words and manner had made a great impression, and who was eager to discontinue a mode of treatment which subjected the patients to the greatest pain and privation, and had already proved unfortunate, eagerly acquiesced, and Hartley was placed in full authority in the sick-room.

Windows were thrown open, fires reduced or discontinued, loads of bed-clothes removed, cooling drinks superseded mulled wine and spices. The sick-nurses cried out murder. Doctors Tourniquet and Lancelot retired in disgust, menacing something like a general pestilence, in vengeance of what they termed rebellion against the neglect of the aphorisms of Hippocrates. Hartley proceeded quietly and steadily, and the patients got into a fair road of recovery.

The young Northumbrian was neither conceited nor artful ; yet, with all his plainness of character, he could not but know the influence which a successful physician obtains over the parents of the children whom he has saved from the grave, and especially before the cure is actually completed. He resolved to use this influence in behalf of his old companion, trusting that the military tenacity of General Witherington would give way on consideration of the obligation so lately conferred upon him.

On his way to the General's house, which was at present his constant place of residence, he examined the packet which Middlemas had put into his hand. It contained the picture of Menie Gray, plainly set, and the ring, with brilliants, which Doctor Gray had given to Richard as his mother's last gift. The first of these tokens extracted from honest Hartley a sigh, perhaps a tear, of sad remembrance. 'I fear,' he said, 'she has not chosen worthily; but she shall be happy, if I can make her so.'

Arrived at the residence of General Witherington, our doctor went first to the sick apartment, and then carried to their parents the delightful account that the recovery of the children might be considered as certain. 'May the God of Israel bless thee, young man!' said the lady, trembling with emotion; 'thou hast wiped the tear from the eye of the despairing mother. And yet—alas! alas! still it must flow when I think of my cherub Reuben. Oh! Mr. Hartley, why did we not know you a week sooner—my darling had not then died?'

'God gives and takes away, my lady,' answered Hartley; 'and you must remember that two are restored to you out of three. It is far from certain that the treatment I have used towards the convalescents would have brought through their brother; for the case, as reported to me, was of a very inveterate description.'

'Doctor,' said Witherington, his voice testifying more emotion than he usually or willingly gave way to, 'you can comfort the sick in spirit as well as the sick in body. But it is time we settle our wager. You betted your reputation, which remains with you, increased by all the credit due to your eminent success, against a thousand gold mohurs, the value of which you will find in that pocket-book.'

'General Witherington,' said Hartley, 'you are wealthy, and entitled to be generous; I am poor, and not entitled to decline whatever may be, even in a liberal sense, a compensation for my professional attendance. But there is a bound to extravagance, both in giving and accepting; and I must not hazard the newly-acquired reputation with which you flatter me by giving room to have it said that I fleeced the parents when their feelings were all afloat with anxiety for their children. Allow me to divide this large sum: one half I will thankfully retain, as a most liberal recompense for my labour; and if you still think you owe me anything, let me have it in the advantage of your good opinion and countenance.'

'If I acquiesce in your proposal, Doctor Hartley,' said the General, reluctantly receiving back a part of the contents of the pocket-book, 'it is because I hope to serve you with my interest even better than with my purse.'

'And indeed, sir,' replied Hartley, 'it was upon your interest that I am just about to make a small claim.'

The General and his lady spoke both in the same breath, to assure him his boon was granted before asked.

'I am not so sure of that,' said Hartley; 'for it respects a point on which I have heard say that your Excellency is rather inflexible — the discharge of a recruit.'

'My duty makes me so,' replied the General. 'You know the sort of fellows that we are obliged to content ourselves with: they get drunk, grow pot-valiant, enlist over-night, and repent next morning. If I am to dismiss all those who pretend to have been trepanned, we should have few volunteers remain behind. Every one has some idle story of the promises of a swaggering Sergeant Kite. It is impossible to attend to them. But let me hear yours, however.'

'Mine is a very singular case. The party has been robbed of a thousand pounds.'

'A recruit for this service possessing a thousand pounds! My dear doctor, depend upon it the fellow has gulled you. Bless my heart, would a man who had a thousand pounds think of enlisting as a private sentinel?'

'He had no such thoughts,' answered Hartley. 'He was persuaded by the rogue whom he trusted that he was to have a commission.'

'Then his friend must have been Tom Hillary, or the devil; for no other could possess so much cunning and impudence. He will certainly find his way to the gallows at last. Still this story of the thousand pounds seems a touch even beyond Tom Hillary. What reason have you to think that this fellow ever had such a sum of money?'

'I have the best reason to know it for certain,' answered Hartley. 'He and I served our time together, under the same excellent master; and when he came of age, not liking the profession which he had studied, and obtaining possession of his little fortune, he was deceived by the promises of this same Hillary.'

'Who has had him locked up in our well-ordered hospital yonder?' said the General.

'Even so, please your Excellency,' replied Hartley; 'not, I

think, to cure him of any complaint, but to give him the opportunity of catching one, which would silence all inquiries.'

'The matter shall be closely looked into. But how miserably careless the young man's friends must have been to let a raw lad go into the world with such a companion and guide as Tom Hillary, and such a sum as a thousand pounds in his pocket. His parents had better have knocked him on the head. It certainly was not done like canny Northumberland, as my servant Winter calls it.'

'The youth must indeed have had strangely hard-hearted or careless parents,' said Mrs. Witherington, in accents of pity.

'He never knew them, madam,' said Hartley: 'there was a mystery on the score of his birth. A cold, unwilling, and almost unknown hand dealt him out his portion when he came of lawful age, and he was pushed into the world like a bark forced from shore without rudder, compass, or pilot.'

Here General Witherington involuntarily looked to his lady, while, guided by a similar impulse, her looks were turned upon him. They exchanged a momentary glance of deep and peculiar meaning, and then the eyes of both were fixed on the ground.

'Were you brought up in Scotland?' said the lady, addressing herself, in a faltering voice, to Hartley. 'And what was your master's name?'

'I served my apprenticeship with Mr. Gideon Gray, of the town of Middlemas,' said Hartley.

'Middlemas! Gray!' repeated the lady, and fainted away.

Hartley offered the succours of his profession; the husband flew to support her head, and the instant that Mrs. Witherington began to recover he whispered to her, in a tone betwixt entreaty and warning, 'Zilia, beware — beware!'

Some imperfect sounds which she had begun to frame died away upon her tongue.

'Let me assist you to your dressing-room, my love,' said her obviously anxious husband.

She arose with the action of an automaton, which moves at the touch of a spring, and half-hanging upon her husband, half-dragging herself on by her own efforts, had nearly reached the door of the room, when Hartley, following, asked if he could be of any service.

'No, sir,' said the General, sternly: 'this is no case for a stranger's interference; when you are wanted I will send for you.'

Hartley stepped back on receiving a rebuff in a tone so different from that which General Witherington had used towards him in their previous intercourse, and felt disposed, for the first time, to give credit to public report, which assigned to that gentleman, with several good qualities, the character of a very proud and haughty man. 'Hitherto,' he thought, 'I have seen him tamed by sorrow and anxiety; now the mind is regaining its natural tension. But he must in decency interest himself for this unhappy Middlemas.'

The General returned into the apartment a minute or two afterwards, and addressed Hartley in his usual tone of politeness, though apparently still under great embarrassment, which he in vain endeavoured to conceal.

'Mrs. Witherington is better,' he said, 'and will be glad to see you before dinner. You dine with us, I hope?'

Hartley bowed.

'Mrs. Witherington is rather subject to this sort of nervous fits, and she has been much harassed of late by grief and apprehension. When she recovers from them, it is a few minutes before she can collect her ideas, and during such intervals — to speak very confidentially to you, my dear Doctor Hartley — she speaks sometimes about imaginary events which have never happened, and sometimes about distressing occurrences in an early period of life. I am not, therefore, willing that any one but myself, or her old attendant, Mrs. Lopez, should be with her on such occasions.'

Hartley admitted that a certain degree of light-headedness was often the consequence of nervous fits.

The General proceeded. 'As to this young man — this friend of yours — this Richard Middlemas — did you not call him so?'

'Not that I recollect,' answered Hartley; 'but your Excellency has hit upon his name.'

'That is odd enough. Certainly you said something about Middlemas?' replied General Witherington.

'I mentioned the name of the town,' said Hartley.

'Ay, and I caught it up as the name of the recruit. I was indeed occupied at the moment by my anxiety about my wife. But this Middlemas, since such is his name, is a wild young fellow, I suppose?'

'I should do him wrong to say so, your Excellency. He may have had his follies like other young men; but his conduct has, so far as I know, been respectable; but, considering we lived in the same house, we were not very intimate.'

'That is bad; I should have liked him — that is — it would have been happy for him to have had a friend like you. But I suppose you studied too hard for him. He would be a soldier, ha? Is he good-looking?'

'Remarkably so,' replied Hartley; 'and has a very prepossessing manner.'

'Is his complexion dark or fair?' asked the General.

'Rather uncommonly dark,' said Hartley — 'darker, if I may use the freedom, than your Excellency's.'

'Nay, then, he must be a black ouzel indeed! Does he understand languages?'

'Latin and French tolerably well.'

'Of course he cannot fence or dance?'

'Pardon me, sir, I am no great judge; but Richard is reckoned to do both with uncommon skill.'

'Indeed! Sum this up, and it sounds well. Handsome, accomplished in exercises, moderately learned, perfectly well-bred, not unreasonably wild. All this comes too high for the situation of a private sentinel. He must have a commission, doctor — entirely for your sake.'

'Your Excellency is generous.'

'It shall be so; and I will find means to make Tom Hillary disgorge his plunder, unless he prefers being hanged, a fate he has long deserved. You cannot go back to the hospital to-day. You dine with us, and you know Mrs. Witherington's fears of infection; but to-morrow find out your friend. Winter shall see him equipped with everything needful. Tom Hillary shall repay advances, you know; and he must be off with the first detachment of the recruits, in the "Middlesex" Indiaman, which sails from the Downs on Monday fortnight; that is, if you think him fit for the voyage. I daresay the poor fellow is sick of the Isle of Wight.'

'Your Excellency will permit the young man to pay his respects to you before his departure?'

'To what purpose, sir?' said the General, hastily and peremptorily; but instantly added, 'You are right; I should like to see him. Winter shall let him know the time, and take horses to fetch him hither. But he must have been out of the hospital for a day or two; so the sooner you can set him at liberty the better. In the meantime, take him to your own lodgings, doctor; and do not let him form any intimacies with the officers, or any others, in this place, where he may light on another Hillary.'

Had Hartley been as well acquainted as the reader with the circumstances of young Middlemas's birth, he might have drawn decisive conclusions from the behaviour of General Witherington while his comrade was the topic of conversation. But as Mr. Gray and Middlemas himself were both silent on the subject, he knew little of it but from general report, which his curiosity had never induced him to scrutinise minutely. Nevertheless, what he did apprehend interested him so much, that he resolved upon trying a little experiment, in which he thought there could be no great harm. He placed on his finger the remarkable ring entrusted to his care by Richard Middlemas, and endeavoured to make it conspicuous in approaching Mrs. Witherington, taking care, however, that this occurred during her husband's absence. Her eyes had no sooner caught a sight of the gem than they became riveted to it, and she begged a nearer sight of it, as strongly resembling one which she had given to a friend. Taking the ring from his finger, and placing it in her emaciated hand, Hartley informed her it was the property of the friend in whom he had just been endeavouring to interest the General. Mrs. Witherington retired in great emotion, but next day summoned Hartley to a private interview, the particulars of which, so far as are necessary to be known, shall be afterwards related.

On the succeeding day after these important discoveries, Middlemas, to his great delight, was rescued from his seclusion in the hospital, and transferred to his comrade's lodgings in the town of Ryde, of which Hartley himself was a rare inmate, the anxiety of Mrs. Witherington detaining him at the General's house long after his medical attendance might have been dispensed with.

Within two or three days a commission arrived for Richard Middlemas as a lieutenant in the service of the East India Company. Winter, by his master's orders, put the wardrobe of the young officer on a suitable footing; while Middlemas, enchanted at finding himself at once emancipated from his late dreadful difficulties and placed under the protection of a man of such importance as the General, obeyed implicitly the hints transmitted to him by Hartley, and enforced by Winter, and abstained from going into public, or forming acquaintances with any one. Even Hartley himself he saw seldom; and, deep as were his obligations, he did not perhaps greatly regret the absence of one whose presence always affected him with a sense of humiliation and abasement.

'That is bad ; I should have liked him — that is — it would have been happy for him to have had a friend like you. But I suppose you studied too hard for him. He would be a soldier, ha ? Is he good-looking ?'

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'It shall be so ; and I will find means to make Tom Hillary disgorge his plunder, unless he prefers being hanged, a fate he has long deserved. You cannot go back to the hospital to-day. You dine with us, and you know Mrs. Witherington's fears of infection ; but to-morrow find out your friend. Winter shall see him equipped with everything needful. Tom Hillary shall repay advances, you know ; and he must be off with the first detachment of the recruits, in the "Middlesex" Indiaman, which sails from the Downs on Monday fortnight ; that is, if you think him fit for the voyage. I daresay the poor fellow is sick of the Isle of Wight.'

'Your Excellency will permit the young man to pay his respects to you before his departure ?'

'To what purpose, sir ?' said the General, hastily and peremptorily ; but instantly added, 'You are right ; I should like to see him. Winter shall let him know the time, and take horses to fetch him hither. But he must have been out of the hospital for a day or two ; so the sooner you can set him at liberty the better. In the meantime, take him to your own lodgings, doctor ; and do not let him form any intimacies with the officers, or any others, in this place, where he may light on another Hillary.'

Had Hartley been as well acquainted as the reader with the circumstances of young Middlemas's birth, he might have drawn decisive conclusions from the behaviour of General Witherington while his comrade was the topic of conversation. But as Mr. Gray and Middlemas himself were both silent on the subject, he knew little of it but from general report, which his curiosity had never induced him to scrutinise minutely. Nevertheless, what he did apprehend interested him so much, that he resolved upon trying a little experiment, in which he thought there could be no great harm. He placed on his finger the remarkable ring entrusted to his care by Richard Middlemas, and endeavoured to make it conspicuous in approaching Mrs. Witherington, taking care, however, that this occurred during her husband's absence. Her eyes had no sooner caught a sight of the gem than they became riveted to it, and she begged a nearer sight of it, as strongly resembling one which she had given to a friend. Taking the ring from his finger, and placing it in her emaciated hand, Hartley informed her it was the property of the friend in whom he had just been endeavouring to interest the General. Mrs. Witherington retired in great emotion, but next day summoned Hartley to a private interview, the particulars of which, so far as are necessary to be known, shall be afterwards related.

On the succeeding day after these important discoveries, Middlemas, to his great delight, was rescued from his seclusion in the hospital, and transferred to his comrade's lodgings in

seemed to dissolve the charm which kept his mother motionless. She sighed deeply, relaxed the rigidity of her posture, and sunk back on the cushions from which she had started up. Middlemas turned a look towards her at the sound of the sigh and the rustling of her drapery.

The General hastened to speak. 'My wife, Mr. Middlemas, has been unwell of late; your friend, Mr. Hartley, might mention it to you—an affection of the nerves.'

Mr. Middlemas was, of course, sorry and concerned.

'We have had distress in our family, Mr. Middlemas, from the ultimate and heart-breaking consequences of which we have escaped by the skill of your friend, Mr. Hartley. We will be happy if it is in our power to repay a part of our obligations in services to his friend and *protégé*, Mr. Middlemas.'

'I am only acknowledged as *his protégé*, then,' thought Richard; but he said, 'Every one must envy his friend in having had the distinguished good fortune to be of use to General Witherington and his family.'

'You have received your commission, I presume. Have you any particular wish or desire respecting your destination?'

'No, may it please your Excellency,' answered Middlemas. 'I suppose Hartley would tell your Excellency my unhappy state—that I am an orphan, deserted by the parents who cast me on the wide world, an outcast about whom nobody knows or cares, except to desire that I should wander far enough, and live obscurely enough, not to disgrace them by their connexion with me.'

Zilia wrung her hands as he spoke, and drew her muslin veil closely around her head, as if to exclude the sounds which excited her mental agony.

'Mr. Hartley was not particularly communicative about your affairs,' said the General, 'nor do I wish to give you the pain of entering into them. What I desire to know is, if you are pleased with your destination to Madras?'

'Perfectly, please your Excellency—anywhere, so that there is no chance of meeting the villain Hillary.'

'Oh! Hillary's services are too necessary in the purlieus of St. Giles's, the Lowlights of Newcastle, and such-like places, where human carrion can be picked up, to be permitted to go to India. However, to show you the knave has some grace, there are the notes of which you were robbed. You will find them the very same paper which you lost, except a small sum

which the rogue had spent, but which a friend has made up, in compassion for your sufferings.'

Richard Middlemas sunk on one knee, and kissed the hand which restored him to independence.

'Pshaw!' said the General, 'you are a silly young man'; but he withdrew not his hand from his caresses. This was one of the occasions on which Dick Middlemas could be oratorical.

'O, my more than father,' he said, 'how much greater a debt do I owe to you than to the unnatural parents who brought me into this world by their sin, and deserted me through their cruelty!'

Zilia, as she heard these cutting words, flung back her veil, raising it on both hands till it floated behind her like a mist, and then giving a faint groan, sunk down in a swoon. Pushing Middlemas from him with a hasty movement, General Witherington flew to his lady's assistance, and carried her in his arms, as if she had been a child, into the ante-room, where an old servant waited with the means of restoring suspended animation, which the unhappy husband too truly anticipated might be useful. These were hastily employed, and succeeded in calling the sufferer to life, but in a state of mental emotion that was terrible.

Her mind was obviously impressed by the last words which her son had uttered. 'Did you hear him, Richard?' she exclaimed, in accents terribly loud, considering the exhausted state of her strength — 'did you hear the words? It was Heaven speaking our condemnation by the voice of our own child. But do not fear, my Richard, do not weep! I will answer the thunder of Heaven with its own music.'

She flew to a harpsichord which stood in the room, and, while the servant and master gazed on each other, as if doubting whether her senses were about to leave her entirely, she wandered over the keys, producing a wilderness of harmony, composed of passages recalled by memory, or combined by her own musical talent, until at length her voice and instrument united in one of those magnificent hymns in which her youth had praised her Maker, with voice and harp, like the royal Hebrew who composed it. The tear ebbed insensibly from the eyes which she turned upwards; her vocal tones, combining with those of the instrument, rose to a pitch of brilliancy seldom attained by the most distinguished performers, and then sunk into a dying cadence, which fell, never again to rise — for the songstress had died with her strain.

The horror of the distracted husband may be conceived, when all efforts to restore life proved totally ineffectual. Servants were despatched for medical men — Hartley, and every other who could be found. The General precipitated himself into the apartment they had so lately left, and in his haste ran against Middlemas, who, at the sound of the music from the adjoining apartment, had naturally approached nearer to the door, and, surprised and startled by the sort of clamour, hasty steps, and confused voices which ensued, had remained standing there, endeavouring to ascertain the cause of so much disorder.

The sight of the unfortunate young man wakened the General's stormy passions to frenzy. He seemed to recognise his son only as the cause of his wife's death. He seized him by the collar, and shook him violently as he dragged him into the chamber of mortality.

'Come hither,' he said, 'thou for whom a life of lowest obscurity was too good a fate — come hither, and look on the parents whom thou hast so much envied — whom thou hast so often cursed. Look at that pale emaciated form, a figure of wax, rather than flesh and blood : that is thy mother — that is the unhappy Zilia Moncada, to whom thy birth was the source of shame and misery, and to whom thy ill-omened presence has now brought death itself. And behold me' — he pushed the lad from him, and stood up erect, looking wellnigh in gesture and figure the apostate spirit he described — 'behold me,' he said — 'see you not my hair streaming with sulphur, my brow scathed with lightning? I am the Arch-Fiend — I am the father whom you seek — I am the accursed Richard Tresham, the seducer of Zilia, and the father of her murderer!'

Hartley entered while this horrid scene was passing. All attention to the deceased, he instantly saw, would be thrown away ; and understanding, partly from Winter, partly from the tenor of the General's frantic discourse, the nature of the disclosure which had occurred, he hastened to put an end, if possible, to the frightful and scandalous scene which had taken place. Aware how delicately the General felt on the subject of reputation, he assailed him with remonstrances on such conduct, in presence of so many witnesses. But the mind had ceased to answer to that once powerful key-note.

'I care not if the whole world hear my sin and my punishment,' said Witherington. 'It shall not be again said of me that I fear shame more than I repent sin. I feared shame only for Zilia, and Zilia is dead.'

'But her memory, General — spare the memory of your wife, in which the character of your children is involved.'

'I have no children,' said the desperate and violent man. 'My Reuben is gone to Heaven, to prepare a lodging for the angel who has now escaped from earth in a flood of harmony, which can only be equalled where she is gone. The other two cherubs will not survive their mother. I shall be, nay, I already feel myself, a childless man.'

'Yet I am your son,' replied Middlemas, in a tone sorrowful, but at the same time tinged with sullen resentment — 'your son by your wedded wife. Pale as she lies there, I call upon you both to acknowledge my rights, and all who are present to bear witness to them.'

'Wretch!' exclaimed the maniac father, 'canst thou think of thine own sordid rights in the midst of death and frenzy? My son! Thou art the fiend who hast occasioned my wretchedness in this world, and who will share my eternal misery in the next. Hence from my sight, and my curse go with thee!'

His eyes fixed on the ground, his arms folded on his breast, the haughty and dogged spirit of Middlemas yet seemed to meditate reply. But Hartley, Winter, and other bystanders interfered, and forced him from the apartment. As they endeavoured to remonstrate with him, he twisted himself out of their grasp, ran to the stables, and seizing the first saddled horse that he found, out of many that had been in haste got ready to seek for assistance, he threw himself on its back and rode furiously off. Hartley was about to mount and follow him; but Winter and the other domestics threw themselves around him, and implored him not to desert their unfortunate master at a time when the influence which he had acquired over him might be the only restraint on the violence of his passions.

'He had a *coup de soleil* in India,' whispered Winter, 'and is capable of anything in his fits. These cowards cannot control him, and I am old and feeble.'

Satisfied that General Witherington was a greater object of compassion than Middlemas, whom besides he had no hope of overtaking, and who he believed was safe in his own keeping, however violent might be his present emotions, Hartley returned where the greater emergency demanded his immediate care.

He found the unfortunate general contending with the

domestics, who endeavoured to prevent his making his way to the apartment where his children slept, and exclaiming furiously, 'Rejoice, my treasures — rejoice! He has fled who would proclaim your father's crime and your mother's dishonour! He has fled, never to return, whose life has been the death of one parent and the ruin of another! Courage, my children, your father is with you — he will make his way to you through a hundred obstacles!'

The domestics, intimidated and undecided, were giving way to him, when Adam Hartley approached, and, placing himself before the unhappy man, fixed his eye firmly on the General's, while he said in a low but stern voice — 'Madman, would you kill your children?'

The General seemed staggered in his resolution, but still attempted to rush past him. But Hartley, seizing him by the collar of his coat on each side, 'You are my prisoner,' he said; 'I command you to follow me.'

'Ha! prisoner, and for high treason? Dog, thou hast met thy death!'

The distracted man drew a poniard from his bosom, and Hartley's strength and resolution might not perhaps have saved his life, had not Winter mastered the General's right hand, and contrived to disarm him.

'I am your prisoner, then,' he said; 'use me civilly — and let me see my wife and children.'

'You shall see them to-morrow,' said Hartley; 'follow us instantly, and without the least resistance.'

General Witherington followed like a child, with the air of one who is suffering for a cause in which he glories.

'I am not ashamed of my principles,' he said — 'I am willing to die for my king.'

Without exciting his frenzy, by contradicting the fantastic idea which occupied his imagination, Hartley continued to maintain over his patient the ascendancy he had acquired. He caused him to be led to his apartment, and beheld him suffer himself to be put to bed. Administering then a strong composing-draught, and causing a servant to sleep in the room, he watched the unfortunate man till dawn of morning.

General Witherington awoke in his full senses, and apparently conscious of his real situation, which he testified by low groans, sobs, and tears. When Hartley drew near his bedside he knew him perfectly, and said, 'Do not fear me — the fit is over; leave me now, and see after yonder unfortunate. Let

him leave Britain as soon as possible, and go where his fate calls him, and where we can never meet more. Winter knows my ways, and will take care of me.'

Winter gave the same advice. 'I can answer,' he said, 'for my master's security at present; but in Heaven's name, prevent his ever meeting again with that obdurate young man!'

CHAPTER IX

Well, then, the world's mine oyster,
Which I with sword will open.

Merry Wives of Windsor.

WHEN Adam Hartley arrived at his lodgings in the sweet little town of Ryde, his first inquiries were after his comrade. He had arrived last night late, man and horse all in a foam. He made no reply to any questions about supper or the like, but, snatching a candle, ran upstairs into his apartment, and shut and double-locked the door. The servants only supposed that, being something intoxicated, he had ridden hard, and was unwilling to expose himself.

Hartley went to the door of his chamber, not without some apprehensions; and after knocking and calling more than once, received at length the welcome return, 'Who is there?'

On Hartley announcing himself, the door opened, and Middlemas appeared, well dressed, and with his hair arranged and powdered; although, from the appearance of the bed, it had not been slept in on the preceding night, and Richard's countenance, haggard and ghastly, seemed to bear witness to the same fact. It was, however, with an affectation of indifference that he spoke.

'I congratulate you on your improvement in worldly knowledge, Adam. It is just the time to desert the poor heir, and stick by him that is in immediate possession of the wealth.'

'I staid last night at General Witherington's,' answered Hartley, 'because he is extremely ill.'

'Tell him to repent of his sins, then,' said Richard. 'Old Gray used to say, a doctor had as good a title to give ghostly advice as a parson. Do you remember Doctor Dulberry, the minister, calling him an interloper? Ha! ha! ha!'

'I am surprised at this style of language from one in your circumstances.'

'Why, ay,' said Middlemas, with a bitter smile, 'it would

be difficult to most men to keep up their spirits, after gaining and losing father, mother, and a good inheritance, all in the same day. But I had always a turn for philosophy.'

'I really do not understand you, Mr. Middlemas.'

'Why, I found my parents yesterday, did I not?' answered the young man. 'My mother, as you know, had waited but that moment to die, and my father to become distracted; and I conclude both were contrived purposely to cheat me of my inheritance, as he has taken up such a prejudice against me.'

'Inheritance!' repeated Hartley, bewildered by Richard's calmness, and half suspecting that the insanity of the father was hereditary in the family. 'In Heaven's name, recollect yourself, and get rid of these hallucinations. What inheritance are you dreaming of?'

'That of my mother, to be sure, who must have inherited old Monçada's wealth; and to whom should it descend, save to her children? I am the eldest of them — that fact cannot be denied.'

'But consider, Richard — recollect yourself.'

'I do,' said Richard; 'and, what then?'

'Then you cannot but remember,' said Hartley, 'that, unless there was a will in your favour, your birth prevents you from inheriting.'

'You are mistaken, sir: I am legitimate. Yonder sickly brats whom you rescued from the grave are not more legitimate than I am. Yes, our parents could not allow the air of Heaven to breathe on them; me they committed to the winds and the waves. I am nevertheless their lawful child, as well as their pining offspring of advanced age and decayed health. I saw them, Adam: Winter showed the nursery to me while they were gathering courage to receive me in the drawing-room. There they lay, the children of predilection, the riches of the East expended that they might sleep soft and wake in magnificence. I, the eldest brother — the heir — I stood beside their bed in the borrowed dress which I had so lately exchanged for the rags of an hospital. Their couches breathed the richest perfumes, while I was reeking from a pest-house; and I — I repeat it — the heir, the produce of their earliest and best love, was thus treated. No wonder that my look was that of a basilisk.'

'You speak as if you were possessed with an evil spirit,' said Hartley; 'or else you labour under a strange delusion.'

'You think those only are legally married over whom a

drowsy parson has read the ceremony from a dog's-eared prayer-book? It may be so in your English law; but Scotland makes Love himself the priest. A vow betwixt a fond couple, the blue heaven alone witnessing, will protect a confiding girl against the perjury of a fickle swain, as much as if a dean had performed the rites in the loftiest cathedral in England. Nay, more; if the child of love be acknowledged by the father at the time when he is baptized, if he present the mother to strangers of respectability as his wife, the laws of Scotland will not allow him to retract the justice which has, in these actions, been done to the female whom he has wronged, or the offspring of their mutual love. This General Tresham, or Witherington, treated my unhappy mother as his wife before Gray and others, quartered her as such in the family of a respectable man, gave her the same name by which he himself chose to pass for the time. He presented me to the priest as his lawful offspring; and the law of Scotland, benevolent to the helpless child, will not allow him now to disown what he so formally admitted. I know my rights, and am determined to claim them.'

'You do not then intend to go on board the "Middlesex"? Think a little. You will lose your voyage and your commission.'

'I will save my birthright,' answered Middlemas. 'When I thought of going to India, I knew not my parents, or how to make good the rights which I had through them. That riddle is solved. I am entitled to at least a third of Monçada's estate, which, by Winter's account, is considerable. But for you, and your mode of treating the small-pox, I should have had the whole. Little did I think, when old Gray was likely to have his wig pulled off for putting out fires, throwing open windows, and exploding whisky and water, that the new system of treating the small-pox was to cost me so many thousand pounds.'

'You are determined, then,' said Hartley, 'on this wild course?'

'I know my rights, and am determined to make them available,' answered the obstinate youth.

'Mr. Richard Middlemas, I am sorry for you.'

'Mr. Adam Hartley, I beg to know why I am honoured by your sorrow.'

'I pity you,' answered Hartley, 'both for the obstinacy of selfishness which can think of wealth after the scene you saw last night, and for the idle vision which leads you to believe that you can obtain possession of it.'

'Selfish!' cried Middlemas; 'why, I am a dutiful son, labouring to clear the memory of a calumniated mother. And am I a visionary? Why, it was to this hope that I awakened when old Monçada's letter to Gray, devoting me to perpetual obscurity, first roused me to a sense of my situation, and dispelled the dreams of my childhood. Do you think that I would ever have submitted to the drudgery which I shared with you, but that, by doing so, I kept in view the only traces of these unnatural parents, by means of which I proposed to introduce myself to their notice, and, if necessary, enforce the rights of a legitimate child? The silence and death of Monçada broke my plans, and it was then only I reconciled myself to the thoughts of India.'

'You were very young to have known so much of the Scottish law, at the time when we were first acquainted,' said Hartley. 'But I can guess your instructor.'

'No less authority than Tom Hillary's,' replied Middlemas. 'His good counsel on that head is a reason why I do not now prosecute him to the gallows.'

'I judged as much,' replied Hartley; 'for I heard him, before I left Middlemas, debating the point with Mr. Lawford; and I recollect perfectly that he stated the law to be such as you now lay down.'

'And what said Lawford in answer?' demanded Middlemas.

'He admitted,' replied Hartley, 'that, in circumstances where the case was doubtful, such presumptions of legitimacy might be admitted. But he said they were liable to be controlled by positive and precise testimony, as, for instance, the evidence of the mother declaring the illegitimacy of the child.'

'But there can exist none such in my case,' said Middlemas hastily, and with marks of alarm.

'I will not deceive you, Mr. Middlemas, though I fear I cannot help giving you pain. I had yesterday a long conference with your mother, Mrs. Witherington, in which she acknowledged you as her son, but a son born before marriage. This express declaration will, therefore, put an end to the suppositions on which you ground your hopes. If you please, you may hear the contents of her declaration, which I have in her own handwriting.'

'Confusion! is the cup to be for ever dashed from my lips?' muttered Richard; but recovering his composure by exertion of the self-command of which he possessed so large a portion, he desired Hartley to proceed with his communication. Hartley

accordingly proceeded to inform him of the particulars preceding his birth and those which followed after it ; while Middlemas, seated on a sea-chest, listened with inimitable composure to a tale which went to root up the flourishing hopes of wealth which he had lately so fondly entertained.

Zilia Monçada was the only child of a Portuguese Jew of great wealth, who had come to London in prosecution of his commerce. Among the few Christians who frequented his house, and occasionally his table, was Richard Tresham, a gentleman of a high Northumbrian family, deeply engaged in the service of Charles Edward during his short invasion, and, though holding a commission in the Portuguese service, still an object of suspicion to the British government on account of his well-known courage and Jacobitical principles. The high-bred elegance of this gentleman, together with his complete acquaintance with the Portuguese language and manners, had won the intimacy of old Monçada, and, alas ! the heart of the inexperienced Zilia, who, beautiful as an angel, had as little knowledge of the world and its wickedness as the lamb that is but a week old.

Tresham made his proposals to Monçada, perhaps in a manner which too evidently showed that he conceived the high-born Christian was degrading himself in asking an alliance with the wealthy Jew. Monçada rejected his proposals, forbade him his house, but could not prevent the lovers from meeting in private. Tresham made a dishonourable use of the opportunities which the poor Zilia so incautiously afforded, and the consequence was her ruin. The lover, however, had every purpose of righting the injury which he had inflicted, and, after various plans of secret marriage, which were rendered abortive by the difference of religion and other circumstances, flight for Scotland was determined on. The hurry of the journey, the fear and anxiety to which Zilia was subject, brought on her confinement several weeks before the usual time, so that they were compelled to accept of the assistance and accommodation offered by Mr. Gray. They had not been there many hours ere Tresham heard, by the medium of some sharp-sighted or keen-eared friend, that there were warrants out against him for treasonable practices. His correspondence with Charles Edward had become known to Monçada during the period of their friendship ; he betrayed it in vengeance to the British cabinet, and warrants were issued, in which, at Monçada's request, his daughter's name was included. This

might be of use, he apprehended, to enable him to separate his daughter from Tresham, should he find the fugitives actually married. How far he succeeded the reader already knows, as well as the precautions which he took to prevent the living evidence of his child's frailty from being known to exist. His daughter he carried with him, and subjected her to severe restraint, which her own reflections rendered doubly bitter. It would have completed his revenge had the author of Zilia's misfortunes been brought to the scaffold for his political offences. But Tresham skulked among friends in the Highlands, and escaped until the affair blew over.

He afterwards entered into the East India Company's service, under his mother's name of Witherington, which concealed the Jacobite and rebel until these terms were forgotten. His skill in military affairs soon raised him to riches and eminence. When he returned to Britain his first inquiries were after the family of Monçada. His fame, his wealth, and the late conviction that his daughter never would marry any but him who had her first love induced the old man to give that encouragement to General Witherington which he had always denied to the poor and outlawed Major Tresham; and the lovers, after having been fourteen years separated, were at length united in wedlock.

General Witherington eagerly concurred in the earnest wish of his father-in-law, that every remembrance of former events should be buried, by leaving the fruit of the early and unhappy intrigue suitably provided for, but in a distant and obscure situation. Zilia thought far otherwise. Her heart longed, with a mother's longing, towards the object of her first maternal tenderness, but she dared not place herself in opposition at once to the will of her father and the decision of her husband. The former, his religious prejudices much effaced by his long residence in England, had given consent that she should conform to the established religion of her husband and her country; the latter, haughty as we have described him, made it his pride to introduce the beautiful convert among his high-born kindred. The discovery of her former frailty would have proved a blow to her respectability which he dreaded like death; and it could not long remain a secret from his wife that, in consequence of a severe illness in India, even his reason became occasionally shaken by anything which violently agitated his feelings. She had, therefore, acquiesced in patience and silence in the course of policy which Monçada had devised,

and which her husband anxiously and warmly approved. Yet her thoughts, even when their marriage was blessed with other offspring, anxiously reverted to the banished and outcast child who had first been clasped to the maternal bosom.

All these feelings, 'subdued and cherished long,' were set afloat in full tide by the unexpected discovery of this son, redeemed from a lot of extreme misery, and placed before his mother's imagination in circumstances so disastrous.

It was in vain that her husband had assured her that he would secure the young man's prosperity by his purse and his interest. She could not be satisfied until she had herself done something to alleviate the doom of banishment to which her eldest-born was thus condemned. She was the more eager to do so, as she felt the extreme delicacy of her health, which was undermined by so many years of secret suffering.

Mrs. Witherington was, in conferring her maternal bounty, naturally led to employ the agency of Hartley, the companion of her son, and to whom, since the recovery of her younger children, she almost looked up as to a tutelar deity. She placed in his hands a sum of £2000, which she had at her own unchallenged disposal, with a request, uttered in the fondest and most affectionate terms, that it might be applied to the service of Richard Middlemas in the way Hartley should think most useful to him. She assured him of further support as it should be needed; and a note to the following purport was also entrusted to him, to be delivered when and where the prudence of Hartley should judge it proper to confide to him the secret of his birth.

'Oh, Benoni! Oh, child of my sorrow!' said this interesting document, 'why should the eyes of thy unhappy mother be about to obtain permission to look on thee, since her arms were denied the right to fold thee to her bosom? May the God of Jews and of Gentiles watch over thee and guard thee! May He remove, in His good time, the darkness which rolls between me and the beloved of my heart—the first fruit of my unhappy, nay, unhallowed, affection. Do not—do not, my beloved, think thyself a lonely exile, while thy mother's prayers arise for thee at sunrise and at sunset, to call down every blessing on thy head—to invoke every power in thy protection and defence. Seek not to see me. Oh, why must I say so? But let me humble myself in the dust, since it is my own sin, my own folly, which I must blame; but seek not to

see or speak with me — it might be the death of both. Confide thy thoughts to the excellent Hartley, who hath been the guardian angel of us all, even as the tribes of Israel had each their guardian angel. What thou shalt wish, and he shall advise in thy behalf, shall be done, if in the power of a mother. And the love of a mother, — is it bounded by seas, or can deserts and distance measure its limits? Oh, child of my sorrow! Oh, Benoni! let thy spirit be with mine, as mine is with thee.

Z. M.'

All these arrangements being completed, the unfortunate lady next insisted with her husband that she should be permitted to see her son in that parting interview which terminated so fatally. Hartley, therefore, now discharged as her executor the duty entrusted to him as her confidential agent.

'Surely,' he thought, as, having finished his communication, he was about to leave the apartment — 'surely the demons of ambition and avarice will unclothe the talons which they have fixed upon this man, at a charm like this.'

And indeed Richard's heart had been formed of the nether millstone had he not been duly affected by these first and last tokens of his mother's affection. He leant his head upon a table, and his tears flowed plentifully. Hartley left him undisturbed for more than an hour, and on his return found him in nearly the same attitude in which he had left him.

'I regret to disturb you at this moment,' he said, 'but I have still a part of my duty to discharge. I must place in your possession the deposit which your mother made in my hands; and I must also remind you that time flies fast, and that you have scarce an hour or two to determine whether you will prosecute your Indian voyage under the new view of circumstances which I have opened to you.'

Middlemas took the bills which his mother had bequeathed him. As he raised his head Hartley could observe that his face was stained with tears. Yet he counted over the money with mercantile accuracy; and though he assumed the pen for the purpose of writing a discharge with an air of inconsolable dejection, yet he drew it up in good set terms, like one who had his senses much at his command.

'And now,' he said, in a mournful voice, 'give me my mother's narrative.'

Hartley almost started, and answered hastily, 'You have the poor lady's letter, which was addressed to yourself; the

narrative is addressed to me. It is my warrant for disposing of a large sum of money ; it concerns the rights of third parties, and I cannot part with it.'

'Surely — surely it were better to deliver it into my hands, were it but to weep over it,' answered Middlemas. 'My fortune, Hartley, has been very cruel. You see that my parents purposed to have made me their undoubted heir ; yet their purpose was disappointed by accident. And now my mother comes with well-intended fondness, and, while she means to advance my fortune, furnishes evidence to destroy it. Come — come, Hartley, you must be conscious that my mother wrote those details entirely for my information. I am the rightful owner, and insist on having them.'

'I am sorry I must insist on refusing your demand,' answered Hartley, putting the papers in his pocket. 'You ought to consider that, if this communication has destroyed the idle and groundless hopes which you have indulged in, it has, at the same time, more than trebled your capital ; and that if there are some hundreds or thousands in the world richer than yourself, there are many millions not half so well provided. Set a brave spirit, then, against your fortune, and do not doubt your success in life.'

His words seemed to sink into the gloomy mind of Middlemas. He stood silent for a moment, and then answered with a reluctant and insinuating voice —

'My dear Hartley, we have long been companions ; you can have neither pleasure nor interest in ruining my hopes — you may find some in forwarding them. Monçada's fortune will enable me to allow five thousand pounds to the friend who should aid me in my difficulties.'

'Good morning to you, Mr. Middlemas,' said Hartley, endeavouring to withdraw.

'One moment — one moment,' said Middlemas, holding his friend by the button at the same time, 'I meant to say ten thousand — and — and — marry whomsoever you like — I will not be your hindrance.'

'You are a villain !' said Hartley, breaking from him, 'and I always thought you so.'

'And you,' answered Middlemas, 'are a fool, and I never thought you better. Off he goes. Let him — the game has been played and lost. I must hedge my bets : India must be my back-play.'

All was in readiness for his departure. A small vessel and

a favouring gale conveyed him and several other military gentlemen to the Downs, where the Indiaman which was to transport them from Europe lay ready for their reception.

His first feelings were sufficiently disconsolate. But accustomed from his infancy to conceal his internal thoughts, he appeared in the course of a week the gayest and best-bred passenger who ever dared the long and weary space betwixt Old England and her Indian possessions. At Madras, where the sociable feelings of the resident inhabitants give ready way to enthusiasm in behalf of any stranger of agreeable qualities, he experienced that warm hospitality which distinguishes the British character in the East.

Middlemas was well received in company, and in the way of becoming an indispensable guest at every entertainment in the place, when the vessel on board of which Hartley acted as surgeon's mate arrived at the same settlement. The latter would not, from his situation, have been entitled to expect much civility and attention; but this disadvantage was made up by his possessing the most powerful introductions from General Witherington, and from other persons of weight in Leadenhall Street, the General's friends, to the principal inhabitants in the settlement. He found himself once more, therefore, moving in the same sphere with Middlemas, and under the alternative of living with him on decent and distant terms, or of breaking off with him altogether.

The first of these courses might perhaps have been the wisest; but the other was most congenial to the blunt and plain character of Hartley, who saw neither propriety nor comfort in maintaining a show of friendly intercourse, to conceal hate, contempt, and mutual dislike.

The circle at Fort St. George was much more restricted at that time than it has been since. The coldness of the young men did not escape notice. It transpired that they had been once intimates and fellow-students; yet it was now found that they hesitated at accepting invitations to the same parties. Rumour assigned many different and incompatible reasons for this deadly breach, to which Hartley gave no attention whatever, while Lieutenant Middlemas took care to countenance those which represented the cause of the quarrel most favourably to himself.

'A little bit of rivalry had taken place,' he said, when pressed by gentlemen for an explanation; 'he had only had the good luck to get further in the good graces of a fair lady

than his friend Hartley, who had made a quarrel of it, as they saw. He thought it very silly to keep up spleen, at such a distance of time and space. He was sorry, more for the sake of the strangeness of the appearance of the thing than anything else, although his friend had really some very good points about him.

While these whispers were working their effect in society, they did not prevent Hartley from receiving the most flattering assurances of encouragement and official promotion from the Madras government as opportunity should arise. Soon after, it was intimated to him that a medical appointment of a lucrative nature in a remote settlement was conferred on him, which removed him for some time from Madras and its neighbourhood.

Hartley accordingly sailed on his distant expedition; and it was observed that after his departure the character of Middlemas, as if some check had been removed, began to display itself in disagreeable colours. It was noticed that this young man, whose manners were so agreeable and so courteous during the first months after his arrival in India, began now to show symptoms of a haughty and overbearing spirit. He had adopted, for reasons which the reader may conjecture, but which appeared to be mere whim at Fort St. George, the name of Tresham in addition to that by which he had hitherto been distinguished, and in this he persisted with an obstinacy which belonged more to the pride than the craft of his character. The lieutenant-colonel of the regiment, an old cross-tempered martinet, did not choose to indulge the captain (such was now the rank of Middlemas) in this humour.

'He knew no officer,' he said, 'by any name save that which he bore in his commission,' and he Middlemas'd the captain on all occasions.

One fatal evening, the captain was so much provoked as to intimate peremptorily 'that he knew his own name best.'

'Why, Captain Middlemas,' replied the colonel, 'it is not every child that knows its own father, so how can every man be so sure of his own name?'

The bow was drawn at a venture, but the shaft found the rent in the armour and stung deeply. In spite of all the interposition which could be attempted, Middlemas insisted on challenging the colonel, who could be persuaded to no apology.

'If Captain Middlemas,' he said, 'thought the cap fitted, he was welcome to wear it.'

The result was a meeting, in which, after the parties had exchanged shots, the seconds tendered their mediation. It was rejected by Middlemas, who at the second fire had the misfortune to kill his commanding officer. In consequence, he was obliged to fly from the British settlements; for, being universally blamed for having pushed the quarrel to extremity, there was little doubt that the whole severity of military discipline would be exercised upon the delinquent. Middlemas, therefore, vanished from Fort St. George, and, though the affair had made much noise at the time, was soon no longer talked of. It was understood, in general, that he had gone to seek that fortune at the court of some native prince which he could no longer hope for in the British settlements.

CHAPTER X

THREE years passed away after the fatal rencounter mentioned in the last chapter, and Doctor Hartley, returning from his appointed mission, which was only temporary, received encouragement to settle in Madras in a medical capacity ; and, upon having done so, soon had reason to think he had chosen a line in which he might rise to wealth and reputation. His practice was not confined to his countrymen, but much sought after among the natives, who, whatever may be their prejudices against the Europeans in other respects, universally esteem their superior powers in the medical profession. This lucrative branch of practice rendered it necessary that Hartley should make the Oriental languages his study, in order to hold communication with his patients without the intervention of an interpreter. He had enough of opportunities to practise as a linguist, for, in acknowledgment, as he used jocularly to say, of the large fees of the wealthy Moslemah and Hindoos, he attended the poor of all nations gratis, whenever he was called upon.

It so chanced, that one evening he was hastily summoned, by a message from the Secretary of the Government, to attend a patient of consequence. 'Yet he is, after all, only a fakir,' said the message. 'You will find him at the tomb of Cara Razi, the Mohammedan saint and doctor, about one coss from the fort. Inquire for him by the name of Barak el Hadgi. Such a patient promises no fees ; but we know how little you care about the pagodas, and, besides, the Government is your paymaster on this occasion.'

'That is the last matter to be thought on,' said Hartley, and instantly repaired in his palanquin to the place pointed out to him.

The tomb of the *owliah*, or Mohammedan saint, Cara Razi, was a place held in much reverence by every good Mussulman. It

was situated in the centre of a grove of mangos and tamarind-trees, and was built of red stone, having three domes, and minarets at every corner. There was a court in front, as usual, around which were cells constructed for the accommodation of the fakirs who visited the tomb from motives of devotion, and made a longer or shorter residence there as they thought proper, subsisting upon the alms which the faithful never fail to bestow on them in exchange for the benefit of their prayers. These devotees were engaged day and night in reading verses of the Koran before the tomb, which was constructed of white marble, inscribed with sentences from the book of the Prophet, and with the various titles conferred by the Koran upon the Supreme Being. Such a sepulchre, of which there are many, is, with its appendages and attendants, respected during wars and revolutions, and no less by Feringis (Franks, that is) and Hindoos than by Mohammedans themselves. The fakirs, in return, act as spies for all parties, and are often employed in secret missions of importance.

Complying with the Mohammedan custom, our friend Hartley laid aside his shoes at the gates of the holy precincts, and avoiding to give offence by approaching near to the tomb, he went up to the principal *moullah*, or priest, who was distinguishable by the length of his beard and the size of the large wooden beads, with which the Mohammedans, like the Catholics, keep register of their prayers. Such a person, venerable by his age, sanctity of character, and his real or supposed contempt of worldly pursuits and enjoyments, is regarded as the head of an establishment of this kind.

The moullah is permitted by his situation to be more communicative with strangers than his younger brethren, who in the present instance remained with their eyes fixed on the Koran, muttering their recitations without noticing the European, or attending to what he said, as he inquired at their superior for Barak el Hadgi.

The moullah was seated on the earth, from which he did not arise, or show any mark of reverence; nor did he interrupt the tale of his beads, which he continued to count assiduously while Hartley was speaking. When he finished, the old man raised his eyes, and looking at him with an air of distraction, as if he was endeavouring to recollect what he had been saying, he at length pointed to one of the cells, and resumed his devotions like one who felt impatient of whatever withdrew his attention from his sacred duties, were it but for an instant.

Hartley entered the cell indicated, with the usual salutation of '*Salam alaikum.*' His patient lay on a little carpet in a corner of the small whitewashed cell. He was a man of about forty, dressed in the black robe of his order, very much torn and patched. He wore a high, conical cap of Tartarian felt, and had round his neck the string of black beads belonging to his order. His eyes and posture indicated suffering, which he was enduring with stoical patience.

'*Salam alaikum,*' said Hartley; 'you are in pain, my father?' a title which he gave rather to the profession than to the years of the person he addressed.

'*Salam alaikum bema sabartem,*' answered the fakir. 'Well is it for you that you have suffered patiently. The Book saith, such shall be the greeting of the angels to those who enter paradise.'

The conversation being thus opened, the physician proceeded to inquire into the complaints of the patient, and to prescribe what he thought advisable. Having done this, he was about to retire, when, to his great surprise, the fakir tendered him a ring of some value.

'The wise,' said Hartley, declining the present, and at the same time paying a suitable compliment to the fakir's cap and robe — 'the wise of every country are brethren. My left hand takes no guerdon of my right.'

'A Feringi can then refuse gold!' said the fakir. 'I thought they took it from every hand, whether pure as that of an houri or leprous like Gehazi's, even as the hungry dog reckoneth not whether the flesh he eateth be of the camel of the prophet Saleth or of the ass of Degial, on whose head be curses!'

'The Book says,' replied Hartley, 'that it is Allah who closes and who enlarges the heart. Frank and Mussulman are all alike moulded by His pleasure.'

'My brother hath spoken wisely,' answered the patient. 'Welcome the disease, if it bring thee acquainted with a wise physician. For what saith the poet — "It is well to have fallen to the earth, if while grovelling there thou shalt discover a diamond"?'

The physician made repeated visits to his patient, and continued to do so even after the health of El Hadgi was entirely restored. He had no difficulty in discerning in him one of those secret agents frequently employed by Asiatic sovereigns. His intelligence, his learning, above all, his versatility and freedom from prejudices of every kind, left no doubt of Barak's

possessing the necessary qualifications for conducting such delicate negotiations ; while his gravity of habit and profession could not prevent his features from expressing occasionally a perception of humour, not usually seen in devotees of his class.

Barak el Hadgi talked often, amidst their private conversations, of the power and dignity of the Nawaub of Mysore ; and Hartley had little doubt that he came from the court of Hyder Ali on some secret mission, perhaps for achieving a more solid peace betwixt that able and sagacious prince and the East India Company's Government, that which existed for the time being regarded on both parts as little more than a hollow and insincere truce. He told many stories to the advantage of this prince, who certainly was one of the wisest that Hindostan could boast, and, amidst great crimes, perpetrated to gratify his ambition, displayed many instances of princely generosity, and, what was a little more surprising, of even-handed justice.

On one occasion, shortly before Barak el Hadgi left Madras, he visited the doctor, and partook of his sherbet, which he preferred to his own, perhaps because a few glasses of rum or brandy were usually added to enrich the compound. It might be owing to repeated applications to the jar which contained this generous fluid, that the pilgrim became more than usually frank in his communications, and, not contented with praising his Nawaub with the most hyperbolic eloquence, he began to insinuate the influence which he himself enjoyed with the Invincible, the Lord and Shield of the Faith of the Prophet.

'Brother of my soul,' he said, 'do but think if thou needest aught that the all-powerful Hyder Ali Khan Bahauder can give ; and then use not the intercession of those who dwell in palaces, and wear jewels in their turbans, but seek the cell of thy brother at the great city, which is Seringapatam. And the poor fakir, in his torn cloak, shall better advance thy suit with the Nawaub' — for Hyder did not assume the title of Sultaun — 'than they who sit upon seats of honour in the divan.'

With these and sundry other expressions of regard, he exhorted Hartley to come into the Mysore, and look upon the face of the great prince, whose glance inspired wisdom and whose nod conferred wealth, so that folly or poverty could not appear before him. He offered at the same time to requite the kindness which Hartley had evinced to him, by showing him whatever was worthy the attention of a sage in the land of Mysore.

Hartley was not reluctant to promise to undertake the proposed journey, if the continuance of good understanding betwixt their governments should render it practicable, and in reality looked forward to the possibility of such an event with a good deal of interest. The friends parted with mutual good wishes, after exchanging, in the Oriental fashion, such gifts as became sages, to whom knowledge was to be supposed dearer than wealth. Barak el Hadgi presented Hartley with a small quantity of the balsam of Mecca, very hard to be procured in an unadulterated form, and gave him at the same time a passport in a peculiar character, which he assured him would be respected by every officer of the Nawaub, should his friend be disposed to accomplish his visit to the Mysore. 'The head of him who should disrespect this safe-conduct,' he said, 'shall not be more safe than that of the barley-stalk which the reaper has grasped in his hand.'

Hartley requited these civilities by the present of a few medicines little used in the East, but such as he thought might, with suitable directions, be safely entrusted to a man so intelligent as his Moslem friend.

It was several months after Barak had returned to the interior of India that Hartley was astonished by an unexpected rencounter.

The ships from Europe had but lately arrived, and had brought over their usual cargo of boys longing to be commanders, and young women without any purpose of being married, but whom a pious duty to some brother, some uncle, or other male relative, brought to India to keep his house, until they should find themselves unexpectedly in one of their own. Doctor Hartley happened to attend a public breakfast given on this occasion by a gentleman high in the service. The roof of his friend had been recently enriched by a consignment of three nieces, whom the old gentleman, justly attached to his quiet hookah, and, it was said, to a pretty girl of colour, desired to offer to the public, that he might have the fairest chance to get rid of his new guests as soon as possible. Hartley, who was thought a fish worth casting a fly for, was contemplating this fair investment with very little interest, when he heard one of the company say to another in a low voice —

'Angels and ministers! there is our old acquaintance, the Queen of Sheba, returned upon our hands like unsaleable goods.'

Hartley looked in the same direction with the two who were

speaking, and his eye was caught by a Semiramis-looking person, of unusual stature and amplitude, arrayed in a sort of riding-habit, but so formed, and so looped and gallooned with lace, as made it resemble the upper tunic of a native chief. Her robe was composed of crimson silk, rich with flowers of gold. She wore wide trousers of light blue silk, a fine scarlet shawl around her waist, in which was stuck a creeze, with a richly ornamented handle. Her throat and arms were loaded with chains and bracelets, and her turban, formed of a shawl similar to that worn around her waist, was decorated by a magnificent aigrette, from which a blue ostrich plume flowed in one direction and a red one in another. The brow, of European complexion, on which this tiara rested, was too lofty for beauty, but seemed made for command; the aquiline nose retained its form, but the cheeks were a little sunken, and the complexion so very brilliant as to give strong evidence that the whole countenance had undergone a thorough repair since the lady had left her couch. A black female slave, richly dressed, stood behind her with a chowry, or cow's tail, having a silver handle, which she used to keep off the flies. From the mode in which she was addressed by those who spoke to her, this lady appeared a person of too much importance to be affronted or neglected, and yet one with whom none desired further communication than the occasion seemed in propriety to demand.

She did not, however, stand in need of attention. The well-known captain of an East Indian vessel lately arrived from Britain was sedulously polite to her; and two or three gentlemen, whom Hartley knew to be engaged in trade, tended upon her as they would have done upon the safety of a rich argosy.

'For Heaven's sake, what is that for a Zenobia?' said Hartley to the gentleman whose whisper had first attracted his attention to this lofty dame.

'Is it possible you do not know the Queen of Sheba?' said the person of whom he inquired, no way loth to communicate the information demanded. 'You must know, then, that she is the daughter of a Scotch emigrant, who lived and died at Pondicherry, a sergeant in Lally's regiment. She managed to marry a partizan officer named Montreville, a Swiss or Frenchman, I cannot tell which. After the surrender of Pondicherry, this hero and heroine — But hey — what the devil are you thinking of? If you stare at her that way you will make a scene; for she will think nothing of scolding you across the table.'

But, without attending to his friend's remonstrances, Hartley bolted from the table at which he sat, and made his way, with something less than the decorum which the rules of society enjoin, towards the place where the lady in question was seated.

'The doctor is surely mad this morning ——' said his friend Major Mercer to old Quartermaster Calder.

Indeed, Hartley was not perhaps strictly in his senses; for, looking at the Queen of Sheba as he listened to Major Mercer, his eye fell on a light female form beside her, so placed as if she desired to be eclipsed by the bulky form and flowing robes we have described, and to his extreme astonishment he recognised the friend of his childhood, the love of his youth — Menie Gray herself!

To see her in India was in itself astonishing. To see her apparently under such strange patronage greatly increased his surprise. To make his way to her and address her seemed the natural and direct mode of satisfying the feelings which her appearance excited.

His impetuosity was, however, checked when, advancing close upon Miss Gray and her companion, he observed that the former, though she looked at him, exhibited not the slightest token of recognition, unless he could interpret as such that she slightly touched her upper lip with her forefinger, which, if it happened otherwise than by mere accident, might be construed to mean, 'Do not speak to me just now.'

Hartley, adopting such an interpretation, stood stock still, blushing deeply; for he was aware that he made for the moment but a silly figure. He was the rather convinced of this when, with a voice which in the force of its accents corresponded with her commanding air, Mrs. Montreville addressed him in English, which savoured slightly of a Swiss *patois* — 'You haave come to us very fast, sir, to say nothing at all. Are you sure you did not get your tongue stolen by de way?'

'I thought I had seen an old friend in that lady, madam,' stammered Hartley, 'but it seems I am mistaken.'

'The good people do tell me that you are one Doctors Hartley, sir. Now, my friend and I do not know Doctors Hartley at all.'

'I have not the presumption to pretend to your acquaintance, madam, but him ——'

Here Menie repeated the sign in such a manner that, though it was only momentary, Hartley could not misunder-

stand its purpose ; he therefore changed the end of his sentence, and added, 'But I have only to make my bow, and ask pardon for my mistake.'

He retired back accordingly among the company, unable to quit the room, and inquiring at those whom he considered as the best newsmongers for such information as — 'Who is that stately-looking woman, Mr. Butler ?'

'Oh, the Queen of Sheba, to be sure.'

'And who is that pretty girl who sits beside her ?'

'Or rather behind her,' answered Butler, a military chaplain. 'Faith, I cannot say. Pretty did you call her ?' turning his opera-glass that way. 'Yes, faith, she is pretty — very pretty. Gad, she shoots her glances as smartly from behind the old pile yonder as Teucer from behind Ajax Telamon's shield.'

'But who is she, can you tell me ?'

'Some fair-skinned speculation of old Montreville's, I suppose, that she has got either to toady herself or take in some of her black friends with. Is it possible you have never heard of old Mother Montreville ?'

'You know I have been so long absent from Madras —'

'Well,' continued Butler, 'this lady is the widow of a Swiss officer in the French service, who, after the surrender of Pondicherry, went off into the interior, and commenced soldier on his own account. He got possession of a fort, under pretence of keeping it for some simple rajah or other ; assembled around him a parcel of desperate vagabonds, of every colour in the rainbow ; occupied a considerable territory, of which he raised the duties in his own name, and declared for independence. But Hyder Naig understood no such interloping proceedings, and down he came, besieged the fort and took it, though some pretend it was betrayed to him by this very woman. Be that as it may, the poor Swiss was found dead on the ramparts. Certain it is, she received large sums of money, under pretence of paying off her troops, surrendering of hill-forts, and Heaven knows what besides. She was permitted also to retain some insignia of royalty ; and, as she was wont to talk of Hyder as the Eastern Solomon, she generally became known by the title of Queen of Sheba. She leaves her court when she pleases, and has been as far as Fort St. George before now. In a word, she does pretty much as she likes. The great folks here are civil to her, though they look on her as little better than a spy. As to Hyder, it is supposed he has ensured her fidelity by borrowing the greater part of her

treasures, which prevents her from daring to break with him — besides other causes that smack of scandal of another sort.'

'A singular story,' replied Hartley to his companion, while his heart dwelt on the question, How it was possible that the gentle and simple Menie Gray should be in the train of such a character as this adventuress?

'But Butler has not told you the best of it,' said Major Mercer, who by this time came round to finish his own story. 'Your old acquaintance, Mr. Tresham, or Mr. Middlemas, or whatever else he chooses to be called, has been complimented by a report that he stood very high in the good graces of this same Boadicea. He certainly commanded some troops which she still keeps on foot, and acted at their head in the Nawaub's service, who craftily employed him in whatever could render him odious to his countrymen. The British prisoners were entrusted to his charge, and, to judge by what I felt myself, the devil might take a lesson from him in severity.'

'And was he attached to, or connected with, this woman?'

'So Mrs. Rumour told us in our dungeon. Poor Jack Ward had the bastinado for celebrating their merits in a parody on the playhouse song,

Sure such a pair were never seen,
So aptly formed to meet by nature.'

Hartley could listen no longer. The fate of Menie Gray, connected with such a man and such a woman, rushed on his fancy in the most horrid colours, and he was struggling through the throng to get to some place where he might collect his ideas, and consider what could be done for her protection, when a black attendant touched his arm, and at the same time slipped a card into his hand. It bore, 'Miss Gray, Mrs. Montreville's, at the house of Ram Sing Cottah, in the Black Town.' On the reverse was written with a pencil, 'Eight in the morning.'

This intimation of her residence implied, of course, a permission, nay, an invitation, to wait upon her at the hour specified. Hartley's heart beat at the idea of seeing her once more, and still more highly at the thought of being able to serve her. 'At least,' he thought, 'if there is danger near her, as is much to be suspected, she shall not want a counsellor, or, if necessary, a protector.' Yet, at the same time, he felt the necessity of making himself better acquainted with the circumstances of her case, and the persons with whom she seemed connected. Butler and Mercer had both spoke to their dis-

paragement; but Butler was a little of a coxcomb, and Mercer a great deal of a gossip. While he was considering what credit was due to their testimony, he was unexpectedly encountered by a gentleman of his own profession, a military surgeon, who had had the misfortune to have been in Hyder's prison, till set at freedom by the late pacification. Mr. Esdale, for so he was called, was generally esteemed a rising man, calm, steady, and deliberate in forming his opinions. Hartley found it easy to turn the subject on the Queen of Sheba, by asking whether her Majesty was not somewhat of an adventuress.

'On my word, I cannot say,' answered Esdale, smiling; 'we are all upon the adventure in India, more or less; but I do not see that the Begum Montreville is more so than the rest.'

'Why, that amazonian dress and manner,' said Hartley, 'savour a little of the *picaresca*.'

'You must not,' said Esdale, 'expect a woman who has commanded soldiers, and may again, to dress and look entirely like an ordinary person; but I assure you that, even at this time of day, if she wished to marry, she might easily find a respectable match.'

'Why, I heard that she had betrayed her husband's fort to Hyder.'

'Ay, that is a specimen of Madras gossip. The fact is, that she defended the place long after her husband fell, and afterwards surrendered it by capitulation. Hyder, who piques himself on observing the rules of justice, would not otherwise have admitted her to such intimacy.'

'Yes, I have heard,' replied Hartley, 'that their intimacy was rather of the closest.'

'Another calumny, if you mean any scandal,' answered Esdale. 'Hyder is too zealous a Mohammedan to entertain a Christian mistress; and besides, to enjoy the sort of rank which is yielded to a woman in her condition, she must refrain, in appearance at least, from all correspondence in the way of gallantry. Just so they said that the poor woman had a connexion with poor Middlemas of the — regiment.'

'And was that also a false report?' said Hartley, in breathless anxiety.

'On my soul, I believe it was,' answered Mr. Esdale. 'They were friends, Europeans in an Indian court, and therefore intimate; but I believe nothing more. By the by, though, I believe there was some quarrel between Middlemas, poor fel-

low, and you; yet I am sure that you will be glad to hear there is a chance of his affair being made up?’

‘Indeed!’ was again the only word which Hartley could utter.

‘Ay, indeed,’ answered Esdale. ‘The duel is an old story now; and it must be allowed that poor Middlemas, though he was rash in that business, had provocation.’

‘But his desertion, his accepting of command under Hyder, his treatment of our prisoners—how can all these be passed over?’ replied Hartley.

‘Why, it is possible—I speak to you as a cautious man, and in confidence—that he may do us better service in Hyder’s capital, or Tippoo’s camp, than he could have done if serving with his own regiment. And then, for his treatment of prisoners, I am sure I can speak nothing but good of him in that particular. He was obliged to take the office, because those that serve Hyder Naig must do or die. But he told me himself—and I believe him—that he accepted the office chiefly because, while he made a great bullying at us before the black fellows, he could privately be of assistance to us. Some fools could not understand this, and answered him with abuse and lampoons; and he was obliged to punish them, to avoid suspicion. Yes—yes, I and others can prove he was willing to be kind, if men would give him leave. I hope to thank him at Madras one day soon. All this in confidence. Good morrow to you.’

Distracted by the contradictory intelligence he had received, Hartley went next to question old Captain Capstern, the captain of the Indiaman, whom he had observed in attendance upon the Begum Montreville. On inquiring after that commander’s female passengers, he heard a pretty long catalogue of names, in which that he was so much interested in did not occur. On closer inquiry, Capstern recollected that Menie Gray, a young Scotchwoman, had come out under charge of Mrs. Duffer, the master’s wife. ‘A good, decent girl,’ Capstern said, ‘and kept the mates and guinea-pigs at a respectable distance. She came out,’ he believed, ‘to be a sort of female companion, or upper servant, in Madame Montreville’s family. Snug berth enough,’ he concluded, ‘if she can find the length of the old girl’s foot.’

This was all that could be made of Capstern; so Hartley was compelled to remain in a state of uncertainty until the next morning, when an explanation might be expected with Menie Gray in person.

CHAPTER XI

THE exact hour assigned found Hartley at the door of the rich native merchant, who, having some reasons for wishing to oblige the Begum Montreville, had relinquished, for her accommodation and that of her numerous retinue, almost the whole of his large and sumptuous residence in the Black Town of Madras, as that district of the city is called which the natives occupy.

A domestic, at the first summons, ushered the visitor into an apartment, where he expected to be joined by Miss Gray. The room opened on one side into a small garden or parterre, filled with the brilliant-coloured flowers of Eastern climates, in the midst of which the waters of a fountain rose upwards in a sparkling jet, and fell back again into a white marble cistern.

A thousand dizzy recollections thronged on the mind of Hartley, whose early feelings towards the companion of his youth, if they had slumbered during distance and the various casualties of a busy life, were revived when he found himself placed so near her, and in circumstances which interested from their unexpected occurrence and mysterious character. A step was heard, the door opened, a female appeared; but it was the portly form of Madame de Montreville.

'What do you please to want, sir?' said the lady; 'that is, if you have found your tongue this morning, which you had lost yesterday.'

'I proposed myself the honour of waiting upon the young person whom I saw in your Excellency's company yesterday morning,' answered Hartley, with assumed respect. 'I have had long the honour of being known to her in Europe, and I desire to offer my services to her in India.'

'Much obliged — much obliged; but Miss Gray is gone out, and does not return for one or two days. You may leave your commands with me.'

'Pardon me, madam,' replied Hartley; 'but I have some reason to hope you may be mistaken in this matter. And here comes the lady herself.'

'How is this, my dear?' said Mrs. Montreville, with unruffled front, to Menie, as she entered; 'are you not gone out for two or three days, as I tell this gentleman? *Mais c'est égal*: it is all one thing. You will say "How d'ye do," and "Good-bye," to monsieur, who is so polite as to come to ask after our healths, and as he sees us both very well, he will go away home again.'

'I believe, madam,' said Miss Gray, with appearance of effort, 'that I must speak with this gentleman for a few minutes in private, if you will permit me.'

'That is to say, get you gone? But I do not allow that: I do not like private conversation between young man and pretty young woman; *cela n'est pas honnête*. It cannot be in my house.'

'It may be out of it, then, madam,' answered Miss Gray, not pettishly nor pertly, but with the utmost simplicity. 'Mr. Hartley, will you step into that garden? And you, madam, may observe us from the window, if it be the fashion of the country to watch so closely.'

As she spoke this, she stepped through a lattice-door into the garden, and with an air so simple that she seemed as if she wished to comply with her patroness's ideas of decorum, though they appeared strange to her. The Queen of Sheba, notwithstanding her natural assurance, was disconcerted by the composure of Miss Gray's manner, and left the room, apparently in displeasure. Menie turned back to the door which opened into the garden, and said, in the same manner as before, but with less nonchalance —

'I am sure I would not willingly break through the rules of a foreign country; but I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of speaking to so old a friend, if, indeed,' she added, pausing and looking at Hartley, who was much embarrassed, 'it be as much pleasure to Mr. Hartley as it is to me.'

'It would have been,' said Hartley, scarce knowing what he said — 'it must be a pleasure to me in every circumstance. But this extraordinary meeting — but your father —'

Menie Gray's handkerchief was at her eyes. 'He is gone, Mr. Hartley. After he was left unassisted, his toilsome business became too much for him; he caught a cold, which hung about him, as you know he was the last to attend to his own

complaints, till it assumed a dangerous, and, finally, a fatal, character. I distress you, Mr. Hartley, but it becomes you well to be affected. My father loved you dearly.'

'Oh, Miss Gray!' said Hartley, 'it should not have been thus with my excellent friend at the close of his useful and virtuous life. Alas, wherefore — the question bursts from me involuntarily — wherefore could you not have complied with his wishes? Wherefore —'

'Do not ask me,' said she, stopping the question which was on his lips; 'we are not the formers of our own destiny. It is painful to talk on such a subject; but for once, and for ever, let me tell you that I should have done Mr. Hartley wrong if, even to secure his assistance to my father, I had accepted his hand, while my wayward affections did not accompany the act.'

'But wherefore do I see you here, Menie? Forgive me, Miss Gray, my tongue as well as my heart turns back to long-forgotten scenes. But why here? Why with this woman?'

'She is not, indeed, everything that I expected,' answered Menie; 'but I must not be prejudiced by foreign manners, after the step I have taken. She is, besides, attentive, and generous in her way, and I shall soon' — she paused a moment, and then added, 'be under better protection.'

'That of Richard Middlemas?' said Hartley, with a faltering voice.

'I ought not, perhaps, to answer the question,' said Menie; 'but I am a bad dissembler, and those whom I trust I trust entirely. You have guessed right, Mr. Hartley,' she added, colouring a good deal, 'I have come hither to unite my fate to that of your old comrade.'

'It is, then, just as I feared!' exclaimed Hartley.

'And why should Mr. Hartley fear?' said Menie Gray. 'I used to think you too generous; surely the quarrel which occurred long since ought not to perpetuate suspicion and resentment.'

'At least, if the feeling of resentment remained in my own bosom, it would be the last I should intrude upon you, Miss Gray,' answered Hartley. 'But it is for you, and for you alone, that I am watchful. This person — this gentleman whom you mean to entrust with your happiness — do you know where he is, and in what service?'

'I know both, more distinctly perhaps than Mr. Hartley can do. Mr. Middlemas has erred greatly, and has been severely punished. But it was not in the time of his exile

and sorrow that she who has plighted her faith to him should, with the flattering world, turn her back upon him. Besides, you have, doubtless, not heard of his hopes of being restored to his country and his rank ?

'I have,' answered Hartley, thrown off his guard ; 'but I see not how he can deserve it, otherwise than by becoming a traitor to his new master, and thus rendering himself even more unworthy of confidence than I hold him to be at this moment.'

'It is well that he hears you not,' answered Menie Gray, resenting, with natural feeling, the imputation on her lover. Then instantly softening her tone, she added, 'My voice ought not to aggravate, but to soothe, your quarrel. Mr. Hartley, I plight my word to you that you do Richard wrong.'

She said these words with affecting calmness, suppressing all appearance of that displeasure of which she was evidently sensible, upon this depreciation of a beloved object.

Hartley compelled himself to answer in the same strain.

'Miss Gray,' he said, 'your actions and motives will always be those of an angel ; but let me entreat you to view this most important matter with the eyes of worldly wisdom and prudence. Have you well weighed the risks attending the course which you are taking in favour of a man, who — nay, I will not again offend you — who may, I hope, deserve your favour ?'

'When I wished to see you in this manner, Mr. Hartley, and declined a communication in public, where we could have had less freedom of conversation, it was with the view of telling you everything. Some pain I thought old recollections might give, but I trusted it would be momentary ; and, as I desire to retain your friendship, it is proper I should show that I still deserve it. I must then first tell you my situation after my father's death. In the world's opinion, we were always poor, you know ; but in the proper sense I had not known what real poverty was until I was placed in dependence upon a distant relation of my poor father, who made our relationship a reason for casting upon me all the drudgery of her household, while she would not allow that it gave me a claim to countenance, kindness, or anything but the relief of my most pressing wants. In these circumstances I received from Mr. Middlemas a letter, in which he related his fatal duel and its consequence. He had not dared to write to me to share his misery. Now, when he was in a lucrative situation, under the patronage of a powerful prince, whose wisdom knew how to prize and protect such

Europeans as entered his service—now, when he had every prospect of rendering our government such essential service by his interest with Hyder Ali, and might eventually nourish hopes of being permitted to return and stand his trial for the death of his commanding officer—now, he pressed me to come to India, and share his reviving fortunes, by accomplishing the engagement into which we had long ago entered. A considerable sum of money accompanied this letter. Mrs. Duffer was pointed out as a respectable woman, who would protect me during the passage. Mrs. Montreville, a lady of rank, having large possessions and high interest in the Mysore, would receive me on my arrival at Fort St. George, and conduct me safely to the dominions of Hyder. It was further recommended that, considering the peculiar situation of Mr. Middlemas, his name should be concealed in the transaction, and that the ostensible cause of my voyage should be to fill an office in that lady's family. What was I to do? My duty to my poor father was ended, and my other friends considered the proposal as too advantageous to be rejected. The references given, the sum of money lodged, were considered as putting all scruples out of the question, and my immediate protectress and kinswoman was so earnest that I should accept of the offer made me, as to intimate that she would not encourage me to stand in my own light by continuing to give me shelter and food—she gave me little more—if I was foolish enough to refuse compliance.'

'Sordid wretch,' said Hartley, 'how little did she deserve such a charge!'

'Let me speak a proud word, Mr. Hartley, and then you will not perhaps blame my relations so much. All their persuasions, and even their threats, would have failed in inducing me to take a step which has an appearance, at least, to which I found it difficult to reconcile myself. But I had loved Middlemas—I love him still, why should I deny it?—and I have not hesitated to trust him. Had it not been for the small still voice which reminded me of my engagements, I had maintained more stubbornly the pride of womanhood, and, as you would perhaps have recommended, I might have expected, at least, that my lover should have come to Britain in person, and might have had the vanity to think,' she added, smiling faintly, 'that, if I were worth having, I was worth fetching.'

'Yet now—even now,' answered Hartley, 'be just to yourself while you are generous to your lover. Nay, do not look

angrily; but hear me. I doubt the propriety of your being under the charge of this unsexed woman, who can no longer be termed a European. I have interest enough with females of the highest rank in the settlement — this climate is that of generosity and hospitality — there is not one of them who, knowing your character and history, will not desire to have you in her society, and under her protection, until your lover shall be able to vindicate his title to your hand in the face of the world. I myself will be no cause of suspicion to him, or of inconvenience to you, Menie. Let me but have your consent to the arrangement I propose, and the same moment that sees you under honourable and unsuspected protection I will leave Madras, not to return till your destiny is in one way or other permanently fixed.'

'No, Hartley,' said Miss Gray. 'It may — it must be, friendly in you thus to advise me; but it would be most base in me to advance my own affairs at the expense of your prospects. Besides, what would this be but taking the chance of contingencies, with the view of sharing poor Middlemas's fortunes should they prove prosperous, and casting him off should they be otherwise? Tell me only, do you, of your own positive knowledge, aver that you consider this woman as an unworthy and unfit protectress for so young a person as I am?'

'Of my own knowledge I can say nothing — nay, I must own that reports differ even concerning Mrs. Montreville's character. But surely the mere suspicion —'

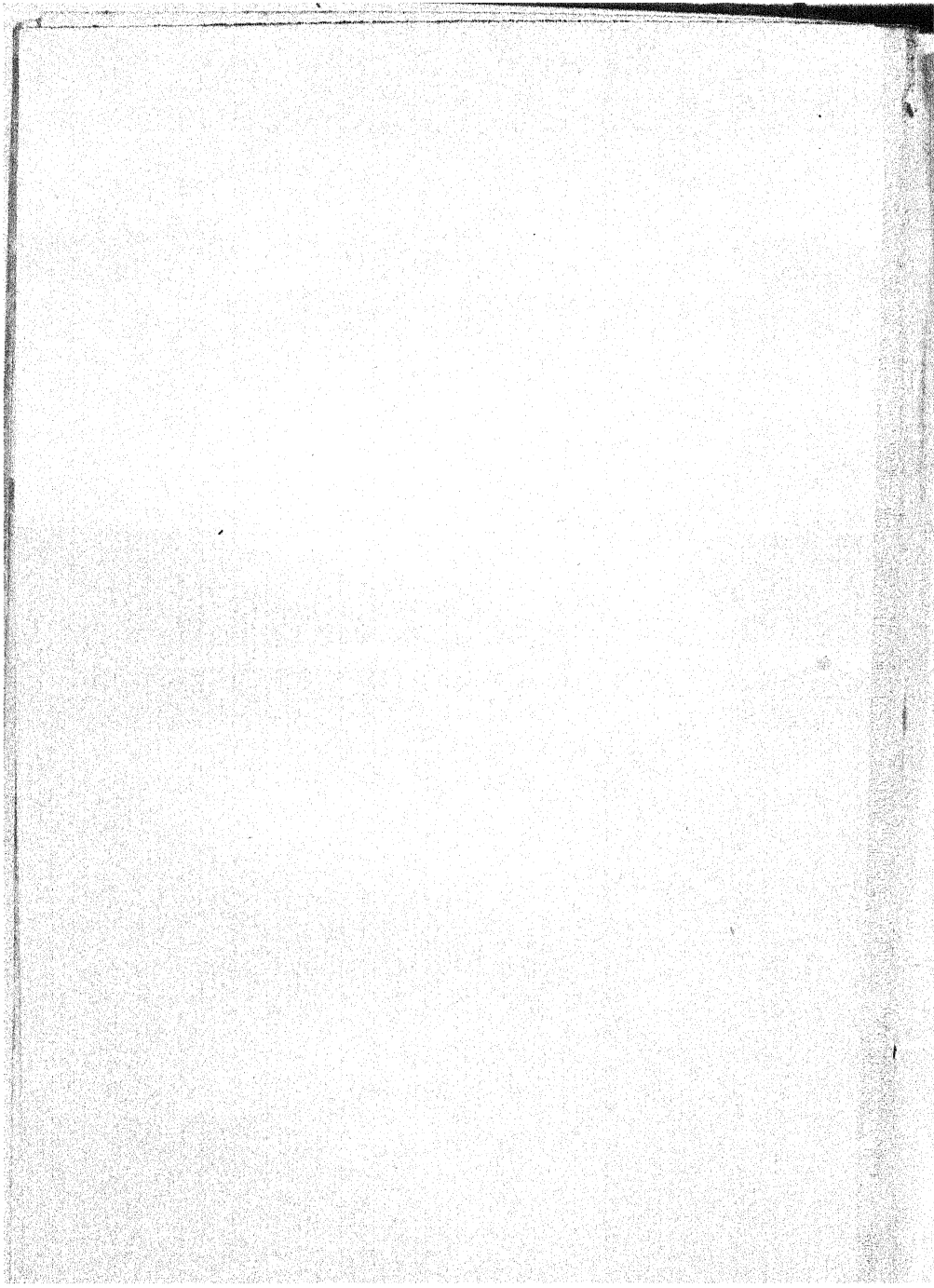
'The mere suspicion, Mr. Hartley, can have no weight with me, considering that I can oppose to it the testimony of the man with whom I am willing to share my future fortunes. You acknowledge the question is but doubtful, and should not the assertion of him of whom I think so highly decide my belief in a doubtful matter? What, indeed, must he be, should this Madame Montreville be other than he represented her?'

'What must he be, indeed!' thought Hartley internally, but his lips uttered not the words. He looked down in a deep reverie, and at length started from it at the words of Miss Gray.

'It is time to remind you, Mr. Hartley, that we must needs part. God bless and preserve you.'

'And you, dearest Menie,' exclaimed Hartley, as he sunk on one knee, and pressed to his lips the hand which she held out to him, 'God bless you! — you must deserve blessing. God protect you! — you must need protection. Oh, should things





prove different from what you hope, send for me instantly, and if man can aid you, Adam Hartley will.'

He placed in her hand a card containing his address. He then rushed from the apartment. In the hall he met the lady of the mansion, who made him a haughty reverence in token of adieu, while a native servant of the upper class, by whom she was attended, made a low and reverential salam.

Hartley hastened from the Black Town, more satisfied than before that some deceit was about to be practised towards Menie Gray, more determined than ever to exert himself for her preservation; yet more completely perplexed, when he began to consider the doubtful character of the danger to which she might be exposed, and the scanty means of protection which he had to oppose to it.

CHAPTER XII

AS Hartley left the apartment in the house of Ram Sing Cottah by one mode of exit, Miss Gray retired by another to an apartment destined for her private use. She, too, had reason for secret and anxious reflection, since all her love for Middlemas, and her full confidence in his honour, could not entirely conquer her doubts concerning the character of the person whom he had chosen for her temporary protectress. And yet she could not rest these doubts upon anything distinctly conclusive: it was rather a dislike of her patroness's general manners, and a disgust at her masculine notions and expressions, that displeased her than anything else.

Meantime, Madame Montreville, followed by her black domestic, entered the apartment where Hartley and Menie had just parted. It appeared from the conversation which follows that they had from some place of concealment overheard the dialogue we have narrated in the former chapter.

'It is good luck, Sadoc,' said the lady, 'that there is in this world the great fool.'

'And the great villain,' answered Sadoc, in good English, but in a most sullen tone.

'This woman, now,' continued the lady, 'is what in Frangistan you call an angel.'

'Ay, and I have seen those in Hindostan you may well call devil.'

'I am sure that this—how you call him—Hartley, is a meddling devil. For what has he to do? She will not have any of him. What is his business who has her? I wish we were well up the Ghauts again, my dear Sadoc.'

'For my part,' answered the slave, 'I am half determined never to ascend the Ghauts more. Hark you, Adela, I begin to sicken of the plan we have laid. This creature's confiding purity—call her angel or woman, as you will—makes my

practices appear too vile, even in my own eyes. I feel myself unfit to be your companion farther in the daring paths which you pursue. Let us part, and part friends.'

'Amen, coward. But the woman remains with me,' answered the Queen of Sheba.¹

'With thee!' replied the seeming black — 'never. No, Adela. She is under the shadow of the British flag, and she shall experience its protection.'

'Yes, and what protection will it afford to you yourself?' retorted the amazon. 'What if I should clap my hands, and command a score of my black servants to bind you like a sheep, and then send word to the Governor of the Presidency that one Richard Middlemas, who had been guilty of mutiny, murder, desertion, and serving of the enemy against his countrymen, is here, at Ram Sing Cottah's house, in the disguise of a black servant?' Middlemas covered his face with his hands, while Madame Montreville proceeded to load him with reproaches. 'Yes,' she said, 'slave, and son of a slave! Since you wear the dress of my household, you shall obey me as fully as the rest of them, otherwise — whips, fetters — the scaffold, renegade — the gallows, murderer! Dost thou dare to reflect on the abyss of misery from which I raised thee, to share my wealth and my affections? Dost thou not remember that the picture of this pale, cold, unimpassioned girl was then so indifferent to thee that thou didst sacrifice it as a tribute due to the benevolence of her who relieved thee, to the affection of her who, wretch as thou art, condescended to love thee?'

'Yes, fell woman,' answered Middlemas, 'but was it I who encouraged the young tyrant's outrageous passion for a portrait, or who formed the abominable plan of placing the original within his power?'

'No; for to do so required brain and wit. But it was thine, flimsy villain, to execute the device which a bolder genius planned: it was thine to entice the woman to this foreign shore, under pretence of a love which, on thy part, cold-blooded miscreant, never had existed.'

'Peace, screech-owl!' answered Middlemas, 'nor drive me to such madness as may lead me to forget thou art a woman.'

'A woman, dastard! Is this thy pretext for sparing me? What, then, art thou, who tremblest at a woman's looks, a

¹ In order to maintain uninjured the tone of passion throughout this dialogue, it has been judged expedient to discard, in the language of the Begum, the *patois* of Madame Montreville.

woman's words? I am a woman, renegade, but one who wears a dagger, and despises alike thy strength and thy courage. I am a woman who has looked on more dying men than thou hast killed deer and antelopes. Thou must traffic for greatness? Thou hast thrust thyself like a five-years' child into the rough sports of men, and wilt only be borne down and crushed for thy pains. Thou wilt be a double traitor, forsooth: betray thy betrothed to the prince, in order to obtain the means of betraying the prince to the English, and thus gain thy pardon from thy countrymen. But me thou shalt not betray. I will not be made the tool of thy ambition. I will not give thee the aid of my treasures and my soldiers, to be sacrificed at last to this Northern icicle. No, I will watch thee as the fiend watches the wizard. Show but a symptom of betraying me while we are here, and I denounce thee to the English, who might pardon the successful villain, but not him who can only offer prayers for his life in place of useful services. Let me see thee flinch when we are beyond the Ghauts, and the Nawaub shall know thy intrigues with the Nizam and the Mahrattas, and thy resolution to deliver up Bangalore to the English, when the imprudence of Tippoo shall have made thee *killedar*. Go where thou wilt, slave, thou shalt find me thy mistress.'

'And a fair, though an unkind, one,' said the counterfeit Sadoc, suddenly changing his tone to an affectation of tenderness. 'It is true I pity this unhappy woman — true I would save her if I could; but most unjust to suppose I would in any circumstances prefer her to my *nourjehan*, my light of the world, my *mootee mahul*, my pearl of the palace —'

'All false coin and empty compliment,' said the Begum. 'Let me hear, in two brief words, that you leave this woman to my disposal.'

'But not to be interred alive under your seat, like the Circassian of whom you were jealous,' said Middlemas, shuddering.

'No, fool; her lot shall not be worse than that of being the favourite of a prince. Hast thou, fugitive and criminal as thou art, a better fate to offer her?'

'But,' replied Middlemas, blushing even through his base disguise at the consciousness of his abject conduct, 'I will have no force on her inclinations.'

'Such truce she shall have as the laws of the zenana allow,' replied the female tyrant. 'A week is long enough for her to determine whether she will be the willing mistress of a princely and generous lover.'

'Ay,' said Richard, 'and before that week expires ——' He stopped short.

'What will happen before the week expires?' said the Begum Montreville.

'No matter — nothing of consequence. I leave the woman's fate with you.'

'T is well; we march to-night on our return, so soon as the moon rises. Give orders to our retinue.'

'To hear is to obey,' replied the seeming slave, and left the apartment.

The eyes of the Begum remained fixed on the door through which he had passed. 'Villain — double-dyed villain!' she said, 'I see thy drift: thou wouldst betray Tippoo, in policy alike and in love. But me thou canst not betray. Ho, there, who waits? Let a trusty messenger be ready to set off instantly with letters, which I will presently make ready. His departure must be a secret to every one. And now shall this pale phantom soon know her destiny, and learn what it is to have rivalled Adela Montreville.'

While the amazonian princess meditated plans of vengeance against her innocent rival and the guilty lover, the latter plotted as deeply for his own purposes. He had waited until such brief twilight as India enjoys rendered his disguise complete, then set out in haste for the part of Madras inhabited by the Europeans, or, as it is termed, Fort St. George.

'I will save her yet,' he said: 'ere Tippoo can seize his prize, we will raise around his ears a storm which would drive the God of War from the arms of the Goddess of Beauty. The trap shall close its fangs upon this Indian tiger ere he has time to devour the bait which enticed him into the snare.'

While Middlemas cherished these hopes, he approached the residency. The sentinel on duty stopped him, as of course; but he was in possession of the countersign, and entered without opposition. He rounded the building in which the President of the Council resided — an able and active, but unconscientious, man, who neither in his own affairs nor in those of the Company was supposed to embarrass himself much about the means which he used to attain his object. A tap at a small postern-gate was answered by a black slave, who admitted Middlemas to that necessary appurtenance of every government, a back stair, which, in its turn, conducted him to the office of the Bramin Paupiah, the *dubash*, or steward, of the great man, and by whose means chiefly he communicated

with the native courts, and carried on many mysterious intrigues, which he did not communicate to his brethren at the council-board.

It is perhaps justice to the guilty and unhappy Middlemas to suppose that, if the agency of a British officer had been employed, he might have been induced to throw himself on his mercy, might have explained the whole of his nefarious bargain with Tippoo, and, renouncing his guilty projects of ambition, might have turned his whole thoughts upon saving Menie Gray, ere she was transported beyond the reach of British protection. But the thin, dusky form which stood before him, wrapped in robes of muslin embroidered with gold, was that of Paupiah, known as a master-counsellor of dark projects, an Oriental Machiavel, whose premature wrinkles were the result of many an intrigue, in which the existence of the poor, the happiness of the rich, the honour of men, and the chastity of women had been sacrificed without scruple to attain some private or political advantage. He did not even inquire by what means the renegade Briton proposed to acquire that influence with Tippoo which might enable him to betray him: he only desired to be assured that the fact was real.

'You speak at the risk of your head if you deceive Paupiah, or make Paupiah the means of deceiving his master. I know, so does all Madras, that the Nawaub has placed his young son, Tippoo, as vice-regent of his newly-conquered territory of Bangalore, which Hyder hath lately added to his dominions. But that Tippoo should bestow the government of that important place on an apostate Feringi seems more doubtful.'

'Tippoo is young,' answered Middlemas, 'and to youth the temptation of the passions is what a lily on the surface of the lake is to childhood: they will risk life to reach it, though, when obtained, it is of little value. Tippoo has the cunning of his father and his military talents, but he lacks his cautious wisdom.'

'Thou speakest truth; but when thou art governor of Bangalore, hast thou forces to hold the place till thou art relieved by the Mahrattas or by the British?'

'Doubt it not: the soldiers of the Begum Mootee Mahul, whom the Europeans call Montreville, are less hers than mine. I am myself her *bukshée* (general) and her sirdars are at my devotion. With these I could keep Bangalore for two months, and the British army may be before it in a week. What do you risk by advancing General Smith's army nearer to the frontier?'

'We risk a settled peace with Hyder,' answered Paupiah, 'for which he has made advantageous offers. Yet I say not but thy plan may be most advantageous. Thou sayest Tippoo's treasures are in the fort?'

'His treasures and his zenana; I may even be able to secure his person.'

'That were a goodly pledge,' answered the Hindoo minister.

'And you consent that the treasures shall be divided to the last rupee, as in this scroll?'

'The share of Paupiah's master is too small,' said the Bramin; 'and the name of Paupiah is unnoticed.'

'The share of the Begum may be divided between Paupiah and his master,' answered Middlemas.

'But the Begum will expect her proportion,' replied Paupiah.

'Let me alone to deal with her,' said Middlemas. 'Before the blow is struck, she shall not know of our private treaty, and afterwards her disappointment will be of little consequence. And now, remember my stipulations—my rank to be restored, my full pardon to be granted.'

'Ay,' replied Paupiah, cautiously, 'should you succeed. But were you to betray what has here passed, I will find the dagger of a lootie which shall reach thee, wert thou sheltered under the folds of the Nawaub's garment. In the meantime, take this missive, and when you are in possession of Bangalore despatch it to General Smith, whose division shall have orders to approach as near the frontiers of Mysore as may be, without causing suspicion.'

Thus parted this worthy pair, Paupiah to report to his principal the progress of these dark machinations, Middlemas to join the Begum on her return to the Mysore. The gold and diamonds of Tippoo, the importance which he was about to acquire, the ridding himself at once of the capricious authority of the irritable Tippoo and the troublesome claims of the Begum, were such agreeable subjects of contemplation, that he scarcely thought of the fate of his European victim, unless to salve his conscience with the hope that the sole injury she could sustain might be the alarm of a few days, during the course of which he would acquire the means of delivering her from the tyrant in whose zenana she was to remain a temporary prisoner. He resolved, at the same time, to abstain from seeing her till the moment he could afford her protection, justly considering the danger which his whole plan might incur if he again awakened the jealousy of the Begum.

This, he trusted, was now asleep ; and, in the course of their return to Tippoo's camp, near Bangalore, it was his study to soothe this ambitious and crafty female by blandishments, intermingled with the more splendid prospects of wealth and power to be opened to them both, as he pretended, by the success of his present surprise.¹

¹ See An Anachronism. Note 1.

CHAPTER XIII

IT appears that the jealous and tyrannical Begum did not long suspend her purpose of agonizing her rival by acquainting her with her intended fate. By prayers or rewards, Menie Gray prevailed on a servant of Ram Sing Cottah to deliver to Hartley the following distracted note : —

‘All is true your fears foretold. He has delivered me up to a cruel woman, who threatens to sell me to the tyrant Tippoo. Save me if you can ; if you have not pity, or cannot give me aid, there is none left upon earth. — M. G.’

The haste with which Dr. Hartley sped to the Fort, and demanded an audience of the governor, was defeated by the delays interposed by Paupiah.

It did not suit the plans of this artful Hindoo that any interruption should be opposed to the departure of the Begum and her favourite, considering how much the plans of the last corresponded with his own. He affected incredulity on the charge when Hartley complained of an Englishwoman being detained in the train of the Begum against her consent, treated the complaint of Miss Gray as the result of some female quarrel unworthy of particular attention, and when at length he took some steps for examining further into the matter, he contrived they should be so tardy, that the Begum and her retinue were far beyond the reach of interruption.

Hartley let his indignation betray him into reproaches against Paupiah, in which his principal was not spared. This only served to give the impassible Bramin a pretext for excluding him from the residency, with a hint that, if his language continued to be of such an imprudent character, he might expect to be removed from Madras, and stationed at some hill-fort or village among the mountains, where his medical knowl-

edge would find full exercise in protecting himself and others from the unhealthiness of the climate.

As he retired, bursting with ineffectual indignation, Esdale was the first person whom Hartley chanced to meet with, and to him, stung with impatience, he communicated what he termed the infamous conduct of the governor's dubash, connived at, as he had but too much reason to suppose, by the governor himself; exclaiming against the want of spirit which they betrayed, in abandoning a British subject to the fraud of renegades and the force of a tyrant.

Esdale listened with that sort of anxiety which prudent men betray when they feel themselves like to be drawn into trouble by the discourse of an imprudent friend.

'If you desire to be personally righted in this matter,' said he at length, 'you must apply to Leadenhall Street, where, I suspect — betwixt ourselves — complaints are accumulating fast, both against Paupiah and his master.'

'I care for neither of them,' said Hartley; 'I need no personal redress — I desire none. I only want succour for Menie Gray.'

'In that case,' said Esdale, 'you have only one resource: you must apply to Hyder himself——'

'To Hyder — to the usurper — the tyrant?'

'Yes, to this usurper and tyrant,' answered Esdale, 'you must be contented to apply. His pride is, to be thought a strict administrator of justice; and perhaps he may on this, as on other occasions, choose to display himself in the light of an impartial magistrate.'

'Then I go to demand justice at his footstool,' said Hartley.

'Not so fast, my dear Hartley,' answered his friend; 'first consider the risk. Hyder is just by reflection, and perhaps from political considerations; but by temperament his blood is as unruly as ever beat under a black skin, and if you do not find him in the vein of judging, he is likely enough to be in that of killing. Stakes and bowstrings are as frequently in his head as the adjustment of the scales of justice.'

'No matter, I will instantly present myself at his *darbar*. The governor cannot for very shame refuse me letters of credence.'

'Never think of asking them,' said his more experienced friend; 'it would cost Paupiah little to have them so worded as to induce Hyder to rid our sable dubash at once and for ever of the sturdy, free-spoken Dr. Adam Hartley. A *vakeel*,

or messenger of government, sets out to-morrow for Seringapatam ; contrive to join him on the road, his passport will protect you both. Do you know none of the chiefs about Hyder's person ?'

'None, excepting his late emissary to this place, Barak el Hadgi,' answered Hartley.

'His support,' said Esdale, 'although only a fakir, may be as effectual as that of persons of more essential consequence. And, to say the truth, where the caprice of a despot is the question in debate, there is no knowing upon what it is best to reckon. Take my advice, my dear Hartley, leave this poor girl to her fate. After all, by placing yourself in an attitude of endeavouring to save her, it is a hundred to one that you only ensure your own destruction.'

Hartley shook his head, and bade Esdale hastily farewell ; leaving him in the happy and self-applauding state of mind proper to one who has given the best advice possible to a friend, and may conscientiously wash his hands of all consequences.

Having furnished himself with money, and with the attendance of three trusty native servants, mounted like himself on Arab horses, and carrying with them no tent, and very little baggage, the anxious Hartley lost not a moment in taking the road to Mysore, endeavouring, in the meantime, by recollecting every story he had ever heard of Hyder's justice and forbearance, to assure himself that he should find the Nawaub disposed to protect a helpless female, even against the future heir of his empire.

Before he crossed the Madras territory, he overtook the vakeel, or messenger of the British government, of whom Esdale had spoken. This man, accustomed for a sum of money to permit adventurous European traders who desired to visit Hyder's capital to share his protection, passport, and escort, was not disposed to refuse the same good office to a gentleman of credit at Madras ; and, propitiated by an additional gratuity, undertook to travel as speedily as possible. It was a journey which was not prosecuted without much fatigue and considerable danger, as they had to traverse a country frequently exposed to all the evils of war, more especially when they approached the Ghauts, those tremendous mountain-passes which descend from the tableland of Mysore, and through which the mighty streams that arise in the centre of the Indian peninsula find their way to the ocean.

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'If you desire to be personally righted in this matter,' said he at length, 'you must apply to Leadenhall Street, where, I suspect — betwixt ourselves — complaints are accumulating fast, both against Paupiah and his master.'

'I care for neither of them,' said Hartley; 'I need no personal redress — I desire none. I only want succour for Menie Gray.'

'In that case,' said Esdale, 'you have only one resource: you must apply to Hyder himself——'

'To Hyder — to the usurper — the tyrant?'

'Yes, to this usurper and tyrant,' answered Esdale, 'you must be contented to apply. His pride is, to be thought a strict administrator of justice; and perhaps he may on this, as on other occasions, choose to display himself in the light of an impartial magistrate.'

'Then I go to demand justice at his footstool,' said Hartley.

'Not so fast, my dear Hartley,' answered his friend; 'first consider the risk. Hyder is just by reflection, and perhaps from political considerations; but by temperament his blood is as unruly as ever beat under a black skin, and if you do not find him in the vein of judging, he is likely enough to be in that of killing. Stakes and bowstrings are as frequently in his head as the adjustment of the scales of justice.'

'No matter, I will instantly present myself at his *durbar*. The governor cannot for very shame refuse me letters of credence.'

'Never think of asking them,' said his more experienced friend; 'it would cost Paupiah little to have them so worded as to induce Hyder to rid our sable dubash at once and for ever of the sturdy, free-spoken Dr. Adam Hartley. A *vakeel*,

or messenger of government, sets out to-morrow for Seringapatam ; contrive to join him on the road, his passport will protect you both. Do you know none of the chiefs about Hyder's person ?'

'None, excepting his late emissary to this place, Barak el Hadgi,' answered Hartley.

'His support,' said Esdale, 'although only a fakir, may be as effectual as that of persons of more essential consequence. And, to say the truth, where the caprice of a despot is the question in debate, there is no knowing upon what it is best to reckon. Take my advice, my dear Hartley, leave this poor girl to her fate. After all, by placing yourself in an attitude of endeavouring to save her, it is a hundred to one that you only ensure your own destruction.'

Hartley shook his head, and bade Esdale hastily farewell ; leaving him in the happy and self-applauding state of mind proper to one who has given the best advice possible to a friend, and may conscientiously wash his hands of all consequences.

Having furnished himself with money, and with the attendance of three trusty native servants, mounted like himself on Arab horses, and carrying with them no tent, and very little baggage, the anxious Hartley lost not a moment in taking the road to Mysore, endeavouring, in the meantime, by recollecting every story he had ever heard of Hyder's justice and forbearance, to assure himself that he should find the Nawaub disposed to protect a helpless female, even against the future heir of his empire.

Before he crossed the Madras territory, he overtook the vakeel, or messenger of the British government, of whom Esdale had spoken. This man, accustomed for a sum of money to permit adventurous European traders who desired to visit Hyder's capital to share his protection, passport, and escort, was not disposed to refuse the same good office to a gentleman of credit at Madras ; and, propitiated by an additional gratuity, undertook to travel as speedily as possible. It was a journey which was not prosecuted without much fatigue and considerable danger, as they had to traverse a country frequently exposed to all the evils of war, more especially when they approached the Ghauts, those tremendous mountain-passes which descend from the tableland of Mysore, and through which the mighty streams that arise in the centre of the Indian peninsula find their way to the ocean.

The sun had set ere the party reached the foot of one of these perilous passes, up which lay the road to Seringapatam. A narrow path, which in summer resembled an empty water-course, winding upwards among immense rocks and precipices, was at one time completely overshadowed by dark groves of teak-trees, and at another found its way beside impenetrable jungles, the habitation of jackalls and tigers.

By means of this unsocial path the travellers threaded their way in silence — Hartley, whose impatience kept him before the vakeel, eagerly inquiring when the moon would enlighten the darkness, which, after the sun's disappearance, closed fast around them. He was answered by the natives according to their usual mode of expression, that the moon was in her dark side, and that he was not to hope to behold her bursting through a cloud to illuminate the thickets and strata of black and slaty rocks amongst which they were winding. Hartley had therefore no resource save to keep his eye steadily fixed on the lighted match of the *sowar*, or horseman, who rode before him, which, for sufficient reasons, was always kept in readiness to be applied to the priming of the matchlock. The vidette, on his part, kept a watchful eye on the *dowrah*,¹ a guide supplied at the last village, who, having got more than halfway from his own house, was much to be suspected of meditating how to escape the trouble of going further. The dowrah, on the other hand, conscious of the lighted match and loaded gun behind him, hallooed from time to time to show that he was on his duty, and to accelerate the march of the travellers. His cries were answered by an occasional ejaculation of 'Ulla!' from the black soldiers, who closed the rear, and who were meditating on former adventures, the plundering of a *kaffila* (party of travelling merchants), or some such exploit, or perhaps reflecting that a tiger, in the neighbouring jungle, might be watching patiently for the last of the party, in order to spring upon him, according to his usual practice.

The sun, which appeared almost as suddenly as it had left them, served to light the travellers in the remainder of the ascent, and called forth from the Mohammedans belonging to the party the morning prayer of *Allah akber*, which resounded in long notes among the rocks and ravines, and they continued with better advantage their forced march until the pass opened upon a boundless extent of jungle, with a single high mud fort rising through the midst of it. Upon this plain rapine and

¹ See Note 2.

war had suspended the labours of industry, and the rich vegetation of the soil had in a few years converted a fertile champaign country into an almost impenetrable thicket. Accordingly, the banks of a small *nullah*, or brook, were covered with the footmarks of tigers and other animals of prey.

Here the travellers stopped to drink, and to refresh themselves and their horses; and it was near this spot that Hartley saw a sight which forced him to compare the subject which engrossed his own thoughts with the distress that had afflicted another.

At a spot not far distant from the brook, the guide called their attention to a most wretched-looking man, overgrown with hair, who was seated on the skin of a tiger. His body was covered with mud and ashes, his skin sun-burnt, his dress a few wretched tatters. He appeared not to observe the approach of the strangers, neither moving nor speaking a word, but remaining with his eyes fixed on a small and rude tomb, formed of the black slate-stones which lay around, and exhibiting a small recess for a lamp. As they approached the man, and placed before him a rupee or two and some rice, they observed that a tiger's skull and bones lay beside him, with a sabre almost consumed by rust.

While they gazed on this miserable object, the guide acquainted them with his tragical history. Sadhu Sing had been a *sipahee*, or soldier, and freebooter of course, the native and the pride of a half-ruined village which they had passed on the preceding day. He was betrothed to the daughter of a sipahee, who served in the mud fort which they saw at a distance rising above the jungle. In due time, Sadhu, with his friends, came for the purpose of the marriage, and to bring home the bride. She was mounted on a *tatoo*, a small horse belonging to the country, and Sadhu and his friends preceded her on foot in all their joy and pride. As they approached the nullah near which the travellers were resting, there was heard a dreadful roar, accompanied by a shriek of agony. Sadhu Sing, who instantly turned, saw no trace of his bride, save that her horse ran wild in one direction, whilst in the other the long grass and weeds of the jungle were moving like the ripple of the ocean, when distorted by the course of a shark holding its way near the surface. Sadhu drew his sabre and rushed forward in that direction; the rest of the party remained motionless until roused by a short roar of agony. They then plunged into the jungle with their drawn weapons, where they speedily

found Sadhu Sing holding in his arms the lifeless corpse of his bride, where a little farther lay the body of the tiger, slain by such a blow over the neck as desperation itself could alone have discharged. The brideless bridegroom would permit none to interfere with his sorrow. He dug a grave for his Mora, and erected over it the rude tomb they saw, and never afterwards left the spot. The beasts of prey themselves seemed to respect or dread the extremity of his sorrow. His friends brought him food and water from the nullah; but he neither smiled nor showed any mark of acknowledgment unless when they brought him flowers to deck the grave of Mora. Four or five years, according to the guide, had passed away, and there Sadhu Sing still remained among the trophies of his grief and his vengeance, exhibiting all the symptoms of advanced age, though still in the prime of youth.

The tale hastened the travellers from their resting-place; the vakeel because it reminded him of the dangers of the jungle, and Hartley because it coincided too well with the probable fate of his beloved, almost within the grasp of a more formidable tiger than that whose skeleton lay beside Sadhu Sing.

It was at the mud fort already mentioned that the travellers received the first accounts of the progress of the Begum and her party, by a *peon*, or foot-soldier, who had been in their company, but was now on his return to the coast. 'They had travelled,' he said, 'with great speed, until they ascended the Ghauts, where they were joined by a party of the Begum's own forces; and he and others, who had been brought from Madras as a temporary escort, were paid and dismissed to their homes. After this, he understood, it was the purpose of the Begum Mootee Mahul to proceed by slow marches and frequent halts to Bangalore, the vicinity of which place she did not desire to reach until Prince Tippoo, with whom she desired an interview, should have returned from an expedition towards Vandicotta, in which he had lately been engaged.'

From the result of his anxious inquiries, Hartley had reason to hope that, though Seringapatam was seventy-five miles more to the eastward than Bangalore, yet, by using diligence, he might have time to throw himself at the feet of Hyder and beseech his interposition before the meeting betwixt Tippoo and the Begum should decide the fate of Menie Gray. On the other hand, he trembled as the peon told him that the Begum's bukshee, or general, who had travelled to Madras with her in disguise, had now assumed the dress and character belonging

to his rank, and it was expected he was to be honoured by the Mohammedan prince with some high office of dignity. With still deeper anxiety, he learned that a palanquin, watched with sedulous care by the slaves of Oriental jealousy, contained, it was whispered, a Feringi, or Frankish woman, beautiful as a *houri*, who had been brought from England by the Begum as a present to Tippoo. The deed of villainy was therefore in full train to be accomplished; it remained to see whether, by diligence on Hartley's side, its course could be interrupted.

When this eager vindicator of betrayed innocence arrived in the capital of Hyder, it may be believed that he consumed no time in viewing the temple of the celebrated Vishnoo, or in surveying the splendid gardens called Loll-bang, which were the monument of Hyder's magnificence, and now hold his mortal remains. On the contrary, he was no sooner arrived in the city than he hastened to the principal mosque, having no doubt that he was there most likely to learn some tidings of Barak el Hadgi. He approached, accordingly, the sacred spot, and as to enter it would have cost a Feringi his life, he employed the agency of a devout Mussulman to obtain information concerning the person whom he sought. He was not long in learning that the fakir Barak was within the mosque, as he had anticipated, busied with his holy office of reading passages from the Koran and its most approved commentators. To interrupt him in his devout task was impossible, and it was only by a high bribe that he could prevail on the same Moslem whom he had before employed to slip into the sleeve of the holy man's robe a paper containing his name and that of the khan in which the *vakeel* had taken up his residence. The agent brought back for answer, that the fakir, immersed, as was to be expected, in the holy service which he was in the act of discharging, had paid no visible attention to the symbol of intimation which the Feringi *sahib* (European gentleman) had sent to him. Distracted with the loss of time, of which each moment was precious, Hartley next endeavoured to prevail on the Mussulman to interrupt the fakir's devotions with a verbal message; but the man was indignant at the very proposal.

'Dog of a Christian!' he said, 'what art thou and thy whole generation, that Barak el Hadgi should lose a divine thought for the sake of an infidel like thee?'

Exasperated beyond self-possession, the unfortunate Hartley was now about to intrude upon the precincts of the mosque in

person, in hopes of interrupting the formal prolonged recitation which issued from its recesses, when an old man laid his hand on his shoulder, and prevented him from a rashness which might have cost him his life, saying, at the same time, 'You are a *sahib Angrezie* (English gentleman); I have been a *telinga* (a private soldier) in the Company's service, and have eaten their salt. I will do your errand for you to the fakir Barak el Hadgi.'

So saying, he entered the mosque, and presently returned with the fakir's answer, in these enigmatical words — 'He who would see the sun rise must watch till the dawn.'

With this poor subject of consolation, Hartley retired to his inn, to meditate on the futility of the professions of the natives, and to devise some other mode of finding access to Hyder than that which he had hitherto trusted to. On this point, however, he lost all hope, being informed by his late fellow-traveller, whom he found at the khan, that the Nawaub was absent from the city on a secret expedition, which might detain him for two or three days. This was the answer which the vakeel himself had received from the *dewan*, with a farther intimation, that he must hold himself ready, when he was required, to deliver his credentials to Prince Tippoo, instead of the Nawaub, his business being referred to the former in a way not very promising for the success of his mission.

Hartley was now nearly thrown into despair. He applied to more than one officer supposed to have credit with the Nawaub, but the slightest hint of the nature of his business seemed to strike all with terror. Not one of the persons he applied to would engage in the affair, or even consent to give it a hearing; and the *dewan* plainly told him, that to engage in opposition to Prince Tippoo's wishes was the ready way to destruction, and exhorted him to return to the coast. Driven almost to distraction by his various failures, Hartley betook himself in the evening to the khan. The call of the muezzins thundering from the minarets had invited the faithful to prayers, when a black servant, about fifteen years old, stood before Hartley, and pronounced these words, deliberately, and twice over — 'Thus says Barak el Hadgi, the watcher in the mosque — He that would see the sun rise, let him turn towards the east.' He then left the caravanserai; and it may be well supposed that Hartley, starting from the carpet on which he had lain down to repose himself, followed his youthful guide with renewed vigour and palpitating hope.

CHAPTER XIV

'T was the hour when rites unholy
Call'd each paynim voice to prayer,
And the star that faded slowly
Left to dews the freshen'd air.

Day his sultry fires had wasted,
Calm and cool the moonbeams shone;
To the vizier's lofty palace
One bold Christian came alone.

THOMAS CAMPBELL. *Quoted from memory.*

THE twilight darkened into night so fast, that it was only by his white dress that Hartley could discern his guide, as he tripped along the splendid bazaar of the city. But the obscurity was so far favourable, that it prevented the inconvenient attention which the natives might otherwise have bestowed upon the European in his native dress, a sight at that time very rare in Seringapatam.

The various turnings and windings through which he was conducted ended at a small door in a wall, which, from the branches that hung over it, seemed to surround a garden or grove.

The postern opened on a tap from his guide, and the slave having entered, Hartley prepared to follow, but stepped back as a gigantic African brandished at his head a scimitar three fingers broad. The young slave touched his countryman with a rod which he held in his hand, and it seemed as if the touch disabled the giant, whose arm and weapon sunk instantly. Hartley entered without farther opposition, and was now in a grove of mango-trees, through which an infant moon was twinkling faintly amid the murmur of waters, the sweet song of the nightingale, and the odours of the rose, yellow jasmine, orange and citron flowers, and Persian narcissus. Huge domes and arches, which were seen imperfectly in the quivering light,

seemed to intimate the neighbourhood of some sacred edifice, where the fakir had doubtless taken up his residence.

Hartley pressed on with as much haste as he could, and entered a side-door and narrow vaulted passage, at the end of which was another door. Here his guide stopped, but pointed and made indications that the European should enter. Hartley did so, and found himself in a small cell, such as we have formerly described, wherein sate Barak el Hadgi, with another fakir, who, to judge from the extreme dignity of a white beard, which ascended up to his eyes on each side, must be a man of great sanctity, as well as importance.

Hartley pronounced the usual salutation of '*Salam alaikum*' in the most modest and deferential tone; but his former friend was so far from responding in their former strain of intimacy, that, having consulted the eye of his older companion, he barely pointed to a third carpet, upon which the stranger seated himself cross-legged after the country fashion, and a profound silence prevailed for the space of several minutes. Hartley knew the Oriental customs too well to endanger the success of his suit by precipitation. He waited an intimation to speak. At length it came, and from Barak.

'When the pilgrim Barak,' he said, 'dwelt at Madras he had eyes and a tongue; but now he is guided by those of his father, the holy Scheik Hali ben Khaledoun, the superior of his convent.'

This extreme humility Hartley thought inconsistent with the affectation of possessing superior influence which Barak had shown while at the presidency; but exaggeration of their own consequence is a foible common to all who find themselves in a land of strangers. Addressing the senior fakir, therefore, he told him in as few words as possible the villainous plot which was laid to betray Menie Gray into the hands of the Prince Tippoo. He made his suit for the reverend father's intercession with the prince himself, and with his father the Nawaub, in the most persuasive terms. The fakir listened to him with an inflexible and immovable aspect, similar to that with which a wooden saint regards his eager supplicants. There was a second pause, when, after resuming his pleading more than once, Hartley was at length compelled to end it for want of matter.

The silence was broken by the elder fakir, who, after shooting a glance at his younger companion by a turn of the eye, without the least alteration of the position of the head and

body, said, 'The unbeliever has spoken like a poet. But does he think that the Nawaub Hyder Ali Khan Behauder will contest with his son, Tippoo the Victorious, the possession of an infidel slave?'

Hartley received at the same time a side glance from Barak, as if encouraging him to plead his own cause. He suffered a minute to elapse, and then replied —

'The Nawaub is in the place of the Prophet—a judge over the low as well as high. It is written that, when the Prophet decided a controversy between the two sparrows concerning a grain of rice, his wife Fatima said to him, "Doth the missionary of Allah well to bestow his time in distributing justice on a matter so slight, and between such despicable litigants?" "Know, woman," answered the Prophet, "that the sparrows and the grain of rice are the creation of Allah. They are not worth more than thou hast spoken; but justice is a treasure of inestimable price, and it must be imparted by him who holdeth power to all who require it at his hand. The prince doth the will of Allah, who gives it alike in small matters as in great, and to the poor as well as the powerful. To the hungry bird a grain of rice is as a chaplet of pearls to a sovereign." I have spoken.'

'*Bismallah!*—Praised be God! he hath spoken like a moullah,' said the elder fakir, with a little more emotion, and some inclination of his head towards Barak, for on Hartley he scarcely deigned even to look.

'The lips have spoken it which cannot lie,' replied Barak, and there was again a pause.

It was once more broken by Scheik Hali, who, addressing himself directly to Hartley, demanded of him, 'Hast thou heard, Feringi, of aught of treason meditated by this *kafir* (infidel) against the Nawaub Behauder?'

'Out of a traitor cometh treason,' said Hartley, 'but, to speak after my knowledge, I am not conscious of such design.'

'There is truth in the words of him,' said the fakir, 'who accuseth not his enemy save on his knowledge. The things thou hast spoken shall be laid before the Nawaub; and as Allah and he will, so shall the issue be. Meantime, return to thy khan, and prepare to attend the vakeel of thy government, who is to travel with dawn to Bangalore, the strong, the happy, the holy city. Peace be with thee! Is it not so, my son?'

Barak, to whom this appeal was made, replied, 'Even as my father hath spoken.'

Hartley had no alternative but to arise and take his leave with the usual phrase, '*Salam* — God's peace be with you!'

His youthful guide, who waited his return without, conducted him once more to his khan, through bye-paths which he could not have found out without pilotage. His thoughts were in the meantime strongly engaged on his late interview. He knew the Moslem men of religion were not implicitly to be trusted. The whole scene might be a scheme of Barak to get rid of the trouble of patronising a European in a delicate affair; and he determined to be guided by what should seem to confirm or discredit the intimation which he had received.

On his arrival at the khan he found the vakeel of the British government in a great bustle, preparing to obey directions transmitted to him by the Nawaub's dewan, or treasurer, directing him to depart the next morning with break of day for Bangalore.

He expressed great discontent at the order, and when Hartley intimated his purpose of accompanying him, seemed to think him a fool for his pains, hinting the probability that Hyder meant to get rid of them both by means of the freebooters, through whose countries they were to pass with such a feeble escort. This fear gave way to another when the time of departure came, at which moment there rode up about two hundred of the Nawaub's native cavalry. The sirdar who commanded these troops behaved with civility, and stated that he was directed to attend upon the travellers, and to provide for their safety and convenience on the journey; but his manner was reserved and distant, and the vakeel insisted that the force was intended to prevent their escape rather than for their protection. Under such unpleasant auspices, the journey between Seringapatam and Bangalore was accomplished in two days and part of a third, the distance being nearly eighty miles.

On arriving in view of this fine and populous city, they found an encampment already established within a mile of its walls. It occupied a *tope*, or knoll, covered with trees, and looked full on the gardens which Tippoo had created in one quarter of the city. The rich pavilions of the principal persons flamed with silk and gold; and spears with gilded points, or poles supporting gold knobs, displayed numerous little banners, inscribed with the name of the Prophet. This was the camp

of the Begum Mootee Mahul, who, with a small body of her troops, about two hundred men, was waiting the return of Tippoo under the walls of Bangalore. Their private motives for desiring a meeting the reader is acquainted with; to the public the visit of the Begum had only the appearance of an act of deference, frequently paid by inferior and subordinate princes to the patrons whom they depend upon.

These facts ascertained, the sirdar of the Nawaub took up his own encampment within sight of that of the Begum, but at about half a mile's distance, despatching to the city a messenger to announce to the Prince Tippoo, as soon as he should arrive, that he had come hither with the English vakeel.

The bustle of pitching a few tents was soon over, and Hartley, solitary and sad, was left to walk under the shade of two or three mango-trees, and, looking to the displayed streamers of the Begum's encampment, to reflect that amid these insignia of Mohammedanism Menie Gray remained, destined by a profligate and treacherous lover to the fate of slavery to a heathen tyrant. The consciousness of being in her vicinity added to the bitter pangs with which Hartley contemplated her situation, and reflected how little chance there appeared of his being able to rescue her from it by the mere force of reason and justice, which was all he could oppose to the selfish passions of a voluptuous tyrant. A lover of romance might have meditated some means of effecting her release by force or address; but Hartley, though a man of courage, had no spirit of adventure, and would have regarded as desperate any attempt of the kind.

His sole gleam of comfort arose from the impression which he had apparently made upon the elder fakir, which he could not help hoping might be of some avail to him. But on one thing he was firmly resolved, and that was, not to relinquish the cause he had engaged in whilst a grain of hope remained. He had seen in his own profession a quickening and a revival of life in the patient's eye, even when glazed apparently by the hand of death; and he was taught confidence amidst moral evil by his success in relieving that which was physical only.

While Hartley was thus meditating, he was roused to attention by a heavy firing of artillery from the high bastions of the town; and, turning his eyes in that direction, he could see advancing, on the northern side of Bangalore, a tide of cavalry, riding tumultuously forward, brandishing their spears in all different attitudes, and pressing their horses to a gallop. The

clouds of dust which attended this vanguard, for such it was, combined with the smoke of the guns, did not permit Hartley to see distinctly the main body which followed; but the appearance of howdahed elephants and royal banners, dimly seen through the haze, plainly intimated the return of Tippoo to Bangalore; while shouts and irregular discharges of musketry announced the real or pretended rejoicing of the inhabitants. The city gates received the living torrent which rolled towards them; the clouds of smoke and dust were soon dispersed, and the horizon was restored to serenity and silence.

The meeting between persons of importance, more especially of royal rank, is a matter of very great consequence in India, and generally much address is employed to induce the person receiving the visit to come as far as possible to meet the visitor. From merely rising up, or going to the edge of the carpet, to advancing to the gate of the palace, to that of the city, or, finally, to a mile or two on the road, is all subject to negotiation. But Tippoo's impatience to possess the fair European induced him to grant on this occasion a much greater degree of courtesy than the Begum had dared to expect, and he appointed his garden, adjacent to the city walls, and indeed included within the precincts of the fortifications, as the place of their meeting; the hour noon, on the day succeeding his arrival; for the natives seldom move early in the morning, or before having broken their fast. This was intimated to the Begum's messenger by the prince in person, as, kneeling before him, he presented the *nuzzar* (a tribute consisting of three, five, or seven gold mohurs, always an odd number), and received in exchange a *khelaut*, or dress of honour. The messenger, in return, was eloquent in describing the importance of his mistress, her devoted veneration for the prince, the pleasure which she experienced on the prospect of their *motakul*, or meeting, and concluded with a more modest compliment to his own extraordinary talents, and the confidence which the Begum reposed in him. He then departed; and orders were given that on the next day all should be in readiness for the *sowarree*, a grand procession, when the prince was to receive the Begum as his honoured guest at his pleasure-house in the gardens.

Long before the appointed hour, the rendezvous of fakirs, beggars, and idlers, before the gate of the palace, intimated the excited expectations of those who usually attend processions; while a more urgent set of mendicants, the courtiers, were

hastening thither, on horses or elephants, as their means afforded, always in a hurry to show their zeal, and with a speed proportioned to what they hoped or feared.

At noon precisely, a discharge of cannon, placed in the outer courts, as also of matchlocks and of small swivels, carried by camels (the poor animals shaking their long ears at every discharge), announced that Tippoo had mounted his elephant. The solemn and deep sound of the *naggra*, or state drum, borne upon an elephant, was then heard like the distant discharge of artillery, followed by a long roll of musketry, and was instantly answered by that of numerous trumpets and tom-toms, or common drums, making a discordant, but yet a martial, din. The noise increased as the procession traversed the outer courts of the palace in succession, and at length issued from the gates, having at their head the *chobdars*, bearing silver sticks and clubs, and shouting at the pitch of their voices the titles and the virtues of Tippoo, the great, the generous, the invincible — strong as Rustan, just as Noushirvan — with a short prayer for his continued health.

After these came a confused body of men on foot, bearing spears, matchlocks, and banners, and intermixed with horsemen, some in complete shirts of mail, with caps of steel under their turbans, some in a sort of defensive armour, consisting of rich silk dresses, rendered sabre-proof by being stuffed with cotton. These champions preceded the prince, as whose bodyguards they acted. It was not till after this time that Tippoo raised his celebrated tiger-regiment, disciplined and armed according to the European fashion. Immediately before the prince came, on a small elephant, a hard-faced, severe-looking man, by office the distributor of alms, which he flung in showers of small copper money among the fakirs and beggars, whose scrambles to collect them seemed to augment their amount; while the grim-looking agent of Mohammedan charity, together with his elephant, which marched with half angry eyes, and its trunk curled upwards, seemed both alike ready to chastise those whom poverty should render too importunate.

Tippoo himself next appeared, richly apparelled, and seated on an elephant, which, carrying its head above all the others in the procession, seemed proudly conscious of superior dignity. The howdah, or seat, which the prince occupied was of silver, embossed and gilt, having behind a place for a confidential servant, who waved the great chowry, or cow-tail, to keep off the flies; but who could also occasionally perform the task of

spokesman, being well versed in all terms of flattery and compliment. The caparisons of the royal elephant were of scarlet cloth, richly embroidered with gold. Behind Tippoo came the various courtiers and officers of the household, mounted chiefly on elephants, all arrayed in their most splendid attire, and exhibiting the greatest pomp.

In this manner the procession advanced down the principal street of the town, to the gate of the royal gardens. The houses were ornamented by broadcloth, silk shawls, and embroidered carpets of the richest colours, displayed from the verandahs and windows; even the meanest hut was adorned with some piece of cloth, so that the whole street had a singularly rich and gorgeous appearance.

This splendid procession having entered the royal gardens, approached, through a long avenue of lofty trees, a *chabootra*, or platform of white marble, canopied by arches of the same material, which occupied the centre. It was raised four or five feet from the ground, covered with white cloth and Persian carpets. In the centre of the platform was the *musnud*, or state cushion of the prince, six feet square, composed of crimson velvet, richly embroidered. By special grace, a small low cushion was placed on the right of the prince, for the occupation of the Begum. In front of this platform was a square tank, or pond, of marble, four feet deep, and filled to the brim with water as clear as crystal, having a large jet or fountain in the middle, which threw up a column of it to the height of twenty feet.

The Prince Tippoo had scarcely dismounted from his elephant and occupied the *musnud*, or throne of cushions, when the stately form of the Begum was seen advancing to the place of rendezvous. The elephant being left at the gate of the gardens opening into the country, opposite to that by which the procession of Tippoo had entered, she was carried in an open litter, richly ornamented with silver, and borne on the shoulders of six black slaves. Her person was as richly attired as silks and gems could accomplish.

Richard Middlemas, as the Begum's general or bukshee, walked nearest to her litter, in a dress as magnificent in itself as it was remote from all European costume, being that of a *banka*, or Indian courtier. His turban was of rich silk and gold, twisted very hard, and placed on one side of his head, its ends hanging down on the shoulder. His mustachios were turned and curled, and his eyelids stained with antimony. The vest was of gold brocade, with a *cummerband*, or sash,

around his waist, corresponding to his turban. He carried in his hand a large sword, sheathed in a scabbard of crimson velvet, and wore around his middle a broad embroidered sword-belt. What thoughts he had under this gay attire, and the bold bearing which corresponded to it, it would be fearful to unfold. His least detestable hopes were perhaps those which tended to save Menie Gray, by betraying the prince who was about to confide in him, and the Begum, at whose intercession Tippoo's confidence was to be reposed.

The litter stopped as it approached the tank, on the opposite side of which the prince was seated on his musnud. Middlemas assisted the Begum to descend, and led her, deeply veiled with silver muslin, towards the platform of marble. The rest of the retinue of the Begum followed in their richest and most gaudy attire — all males, however; nor was there a symptom of woman being in her train, except that a close litter, guarded by twenty black slaves, having their sabres drawn, remained at some distance in a thicket of flowering shrubs.

When Tippoo Sahib, through the dim haze which hung over the waterfall, discerned the splendid train of the Begum advancing, he arose from his musnud, so as to receive her near the foot of his throne, and exchanged greetings with her upon the pleasure of meeting, and inquiries after their mutual health. He then conducted her to the cushion placed near to his own, while his courtiers anxiously showed their politeness in accommodating those of the Begum with places upon the carpets around, where they all sat down cross-legged, Richard Middlemas occupying a conspicuous situation.

The people of inferior note stood behind, and amongst them was the sirdar of Hyder Ali, with Hartley and the Madras vakeel. It would be impossible to describe the feelings with which Hartley recognised the apostate Middlemas and the amazonian Mrs. Montreville. The sight of them worked up his resolution to make an appeal against them, in full durbar, to the justice which Tippoo was obliged to render to all who should complain of injuries. In the meanwhile, the prince, who had hitherto spoken in a low voice, while acknowledging, it is to be supposed, the services and the fidelity of the Begum, now gave the sign to his attendant, who said, in an elevated tone, 'Wherefore, and to requite these services, the mighty prince, at the request of the mighty Begum Mootee Mahul, beautiful as the moon, and wise as the daughter of Giamschid, had decreed to take into his service the bukshee of her armies,

and to invest him, as one worthy of all confidence, with the keeping of his beloved capital of Bangalore.'

The voice of the crier had scarce ceased, when it was answered by one as loud, which sounded from the crowd of bystanders, 'Cursed is he who maketh the robber Leik his treasurer, or trusteth the lives of Moslemah to the command of an apostate!'

With unutterable satisfaction, yet with trembling doubt and anxiety, Hartley traced the speech to the elder fakir, the companion of Barak. Tippoo seemed not to notice the interruption, which passed for that of some mad devotee, to whom the Moslem princes permit great freedoms. The durbar, therefore, recovered from their surprise; and, in answer to the proclamation, united in the shout of applause which is expected to attend every annunciation of the royal pleasure.

Their acclamation had no sooner ceased than Middlemas arose, bent himself before the musnud, and, in a set speech, declared his unworthiness of such high honour as had now been conferred, and his zeal for the prince's service. Something remained to be added, but his speech faltered, his limbs shook, and his tongue seemed to refuse its office.

The Begum started from her seat, though contrary to etiquette, and said, as if to supply the deficiency in the speech of her officer, 'My slave would say that, in acknowledgment of so great an honour conferred on my bukshee, I am so void of means that I can only pray your Highness will deign to accept a lily from Frangistan, to plant within the recesses of the secret garden of thy pleasures. Let my lord's guards carry yonder litter to the zenana.'

A female scream was heard, as, at a signal from Tippoo, the guards of his seraglio advanced to receive the closed litter from the attendants of the Begum.

The voice of the old fakir was heard louder and sterner than before — 'Cursed is the prince who barter justice for lust! He shall die in the gate by the sword of the stranger.'

'This is too insolent!' said Tippoo. 'Drag forward that fakir, and cut his robe into tatters on his back with your *chabouks*.'¹

But a scene ensued like that in the hall of Seyd. All who attempted to obey the command of the incensed despot fell back from the fakir, as they would from the Angel of Death. He flung his cap and fictitious beard on the ground, and the

¹ Long whips.

incensed countenance of Tippoo was subdued in an instant, when he encountered the stern and awful eye of his father. A sign dismissed him from the throne, which Hyder himself ascended, while the officious menials hastily disrobed him of his tattered cloak, and flung on him a robe of regal splendour, and placed on his head a jewelled turban. The durbar rung with acclamations to Hyder Ali Khan Behauder, 'the good, the wise, the discoverer of hidden things, who cometh into the divan like the sun bursting from the clouds.'

The Nawaub at length signed for silence, and was promptly obeyed. He looked majestically around him, and at length bent his look upon Tippoo, whose downcast eyes, as he stood before the throne with his arms folded on his bosom, were strongly contrasted with the haughty air of authority which he had worn but a moment before. 'Thou hast been willing,' said the Nawaub, 'to barter the safety of thy capital for the possession of a white slave. But the beauty of a fair woman caused Solomon ben David to stumble in his path; how much more, then, should the son of Hyder Naig remain firm under temptation! That men may see clearly, we must remove the light which dazzles them. Yonder Feringi woman must be placed at my disposal.'

'To hear is to obey,' replied Tippoo, while the deep gloom on his brow showed what his forced submission cost his proud and passionate spirit.

In the hearts of the courtiers present reigned the most eager curiosity to see the *dénouement* of the scene, but not a trace of that wish was suffered to manifest itself on features accustomed to conceal all internal sensations. The feelings of the Begum were hidden under her veil; while, in spite of a bold attempt to conceal his alarm, the perspiration stood in large drops on the brow of Richard Middlemas.

The next words of the Nawaub sounded like music in the ear of Hartley.

'Carry the Feringi woman to the tent of the Sirdar Belash Cassim (the chief to whom Hartley had been committed). Let her be tended in all honour, and let him prepare to escort her, with the vakeel and the *hakim* Hartley, to the Payeen-Ghaut (the country beneath the passes), answering for their safety with his head.' The litter was on its road to the sirdar's tents ere the Nawaub had done speaking. 'For thee, Tippoo,' continued Hyder, 'I am not come hither to deprive thee of authority, or to disgrace thee before the durbar. Such things

as thou hast promised to this Feringi, proceed to make them good. The sun calleth not back the splendour which he lends to the moon; and the father obscures not the dignity which he has conferred on the son. What thou hast promised, that do thou proceed to make good.'

The ceremony of investiture was therefore recommenced, by which the Prince Tippoo conferred on Middlemas the important government of the city of Bangalore, probably with the internal resolution that, since he was himself deprived of the fair European, he would take an early opportunity to remove the new killedar from his charge; while Middlemas accepted it with the throbbing hope that he might yet outwit both father and son. The deed of investiture was read aloud, the robe of honour was put upon the newly-created killedar, and a hundred voices, while they blessed the prudent choice of Tippoo, wished the governor good fortune, and victory over his enemies.

A horse was led forward, as the prince's gift. It was a fine steed of the Cuttyawar breed, high-crested, with broad hind-quarters; he was of a white colour, but had the extremity of his tail and mane stained red. His saddle was red velvet, the bridle and crupper studded with gilded knobs. Two attendants on lesser horses led this prancing animal, one holding the lance and the other the long spear of their patron. The horse was shown to the applauding courtiers, and withdrawn, in order to be led in state through the streets, while the new killedar should follow on the elephant, another present usual on such an occasion, which was next made to advance, that the world might admire the munificence of the prince.

The huge animal approached the platform, shaking his large wrinkled head, which he raised and sunk, as if impatient, and curling upwards his trunk from time to time, as if to show the gulf of his tongueless mouth. Gracefully retiring with the deepest obeisance, the killedar, well pleased the audience was finished, stood by the neck of the elephant, expecting the conductor of the animal would make him kneel down, that he might ascend the gilded howdah which awaited his occupancy.

'Hold, Feringi,' said Hyder. 'Thou hast received all that was promised thee by the bounty of Tippoo. Accept now what is the fruit of the justice of Hyder.'

As he spoke, he signed with his finger, and the driver of the elephant instantly conveyed to the animal the pleasure of the Nawab. Curling his long trunk around the neck of the ill-fated European, the monster suddenly threw the wretch

prostrate before him, and, stamping his huge shapeless foot upon his breast, put an end at once to his life and to his crimes. The cry which the victim uttered was mimicked by the roar of the monster, and a sound like an hysterical laugh mingling with a scream, which rung from under the veil of the Begum. The elephant once more raised his trunk aloft, and gaped fearfully.

The courtiers preserved a profound silence; but Tippoo, upon whose muslin robe a part of the victim's blood had spirted, held it up to the Nawaub, exclaiming, in a sorrowful yet resentful tone—'Father—father, was it thus my promise should have been kept?'

'Know, foolish boy,' said Hyder Ali, 'that the carrion which lies there was in a plot to deliver Bangalore to the Feringis and the Mahrattas. This Begum (she started when she heard herself named) has given us warning of the plot, and has so merited her pardon for having originally concurred in it,—whether altogether out of love to us we will not too curiously inquire. Hence with that lump of bloody clay, and let the hakim Hartley and the English vakeel come before me.'

They were brought forward, while some of the attendants flung sand upon the bloody traces, and others removed the crushed corpse.

'Hakim,' said Hyder, 'thou shalt return with the Feringi woman, and with gold to compensate her injuries, wherein the Begum, as is fitting, shall contribute a share. Do thou say to thy nation, Hyder Ali acts justly.' The Nawaub then inclined himself graciously to Hartley, and then turning to the vakeel, who appeared much discomposed, 'You have brought to me,' he said, 'words of peace, while your masters meditated a treacherous war. It is not upon such as you that my vengeance ought to alight. But tell the kafir, or infidel, Paupiah and his unworthy master that Hyder Ali sees too clearly to suffer to be lost by treason the advantages he has gained by war. Hitherto I have been in the Carnatic as a mild prince; in future I will be a destroying tempest. Hitherto I have made inroads as a compassionate and merciful conqueror; hereafter I will be the messenger whom Allah sends to the kingdoms which He visits in judgment.'

It is well known how dreadfully the Nawaub kept this promise, and how he and his son afterwards sunk before the discipline and bravery of the Europeans. The scene of just punishment which he so faithfully exhibited might be owing

to his policy, his internal sense of right, and to the ostentation of displaying it before an Englishman of sense and intelligence, or to all of these motives mingled together, but in what proportions it is not for us to distinguish.

Hartley reached the coast in safety with his precious charge, rescued from a dreadful fate when she was almost beyond hope. But the nerves and constitution of Menie Gray had received a shock from which she long suffered severely, and never entirely recovered. The principal ladies of the settlement, moved by the singular tale of her distress, received her with the utmost kindness, and exercised towards her the most attentive and affectionate hospitality. The Nawaub, faithful to his promise, remitted to her a sum of no less than ten thousand gold mohurs, extorted, as was surmised, almost entirely from the hoards of the Begum Mootee Mahul, or Montreville. Of the fate of that adventuress nothing was known for certainty; but her forts and government were taken into Hyder's custody, and report said that, her power being abolished and her consequence lost, she died by poison, either taken by herself or administered by some other person.

It might be thought a natural conclusion of the history of Menie Gray that she should have married Hartley, to whom she stood much indebted for his heroic interference in her behalf. But her feelings were too much and too painfully agitated, her health too much shattered, to permit her to entertain thoughts of a matrimonial connexion, even with the acquaintance of her youth and the champion of her freedom. Time might have removed these obstacles, but not two years after their adventures in Mysore the gallant and disinterested Hartley fell a victim to his professional courage in withstanding the progress of a contagious distemper, which he at length caught, and under which he sunk. He left a considerable part of the moderate fortune which he had acquired to Menie Gray, who, of course, did not want many advantageous offers of a matrimonial character. But she respected the memory of Hartley too much to subdue in behalf of another the reasons which induced her to refuse the hand which he had so well deserved — nay, it may be thought, had so fairly won.

She returned to Britain — what seldom occurs — unmarried though wealthy; and, settling in her native village, appeared to find her only pleasure in acts of benevolence, which seemed to exceed the extent of her fortune, had not her very retired

life been taken into consideration. Two or three persons with whom she was intimate could trace in her character that generous and disinterested simplicity and affection which were the groundwork of her character. To the world at large her habits seemed those of the ancient Roman matron, which is recorded on her tomb in these four words,

DOMUM MANSIT — LANAM FECIT.

MR. CROFTANGRY'S CONCLUSION

If you tell a good jest,
And please all the rest,
Comes Dingley, and asks you, 'What was it ?'
And before she can know,
Away she will go
To seek an old rag in the closet.

DEAN SWIFT.

WHILE I was inditing the goodly matter which my readers have just perused, I might be said to go through a course of breaking-in to stand criticism, like a shooting-pony to stand fire. By some of those venial breaches of confidence which always take place on the like occasions, my private flirtations with the muse of fiction became a matter whispered in Miss Fairscribe's circle, some ornaments of which were, I suppose, highly interested in the progress of the affair, while others 'really thought Mr. Chrystal Croftangry might have had more wit at his time of day.' Then came the sly intimation, the oblique remark, all that sugar-lipped raillery which is fitted for the situation of a man about to do a foolish thing, whether it be to publish or to marry, and that accompanied with the discreet nods and winks of such friends as are in the secret, and the obliging eagerness of others to know all about it.

At length the affair became so far public that I was induced to face a tea-party with my manuscript in my pocket, looking as simple and modest as any gentleman of a certain age need to do upon such an occasion. When tea had been carried round, handkerchiefs and smelling bottles prepared, I had the honour of reading *The Surgeon's Daughter* for the entertainment of the evening. It went off excellently. My friend Mr. Fairscribe, who had been seduced from his desk to join the literary circle, only fell asleep twice, and readily recovered his attention by help of his snuff-box. The ladies were politely attentive, and when the cat, or the dog, or a next neighbour tempted an individual to relax, Katie Fairscribe was on the alert, like an

active whipper-in, with look, touch, or whisper, to recall them to a sense of what was going on. Whether Miss Katie was thus active merely to enforce the literary discipline of her coterie, or whether she was really interested by the beauties of the piece, and desirous to enforce them on others, I will not venture to ask, in case I should end in liking the girl — and she is really a pretty one — better than wisdom would warrant, either for my sake or hers.

I must own my story here and there flagged a good deal; perhaps there were faults in my reading, for, while I should have been attending to nothing but how to give the words effect as they existed, I was feeling the chilling consciousness that they might have been, and ought to have been, a great deal better. However, we kindled up at last when we got to the East Indies, although, on the mention of tigers, an old lady, whose tongue had been impatient for an hour, broke in with, 'I wonder if Mr. Croftangry ever heard the story of Tiger Tullideph?' and had nearly inserted the whole narrative as an episode in my tale. She was, however, brought to reason, and the subsequent mention of shawls, diamonds, turbans, and cummerbands had their usual effect in awakening the imaginations of the fair auditors. At the extinction of the faithless lover in a way so horribly new, I had, as indeed I expected, the good fortune to excite that expression of painful interest which is produced by drawing in the breath through the compressed lips — nay, one miss of fourteen actually screamed.

At length my task was ended, and the fair circle rained odours upon me, as they pelt beaux at the carnival with sugar-plums, and drench them with scented spices. There was 'Beautiful,' and 'Sweetly interesting,' and 'O, Mr. Croftangry,' and 'How much obliged,' and 'What a delightful evening,' and 'O, Miss Katie, how could you keep such a secret so long!' While the dear souls were thus smothering me with rose-leaves, the merciless old lady carried them all off by a disquisition upon shawls, which she had the impudence to say arose entirely out of my story. Miss Katie endeavoured to stop the flow of her eloquence in vain: she threw all other topics out of the field, and from the genuine Indian she made a digression to the imitation shawls now made at Paisley out of real Thibet wool, not to be known from the actual country shawl, except by some inimitable cross-stitch in the border. 'It is well,' said the old lady, wrapping herself up in a rich Kashmere, 'that there is some way of knowing a thing that cost fifty guineas

from an article that is sold for five ; but I venture to say there is not one out of ten thousand that would understand the difference.'

The politeness of some of the fair ladies would now have brought back the conversation to the forgotten subject of our meeting. 'How could you, Mr. Croftangry, collect all these hard words about India — you were never there?' 'No, madam, I have not had that advantage ; but, like the imitative operatives of Paisley, I have composed my shawl by incorporating into the woof a little Thibet wool, which my excellent friend and neighbour, Colonel Mackerris, one of the best fellows who ever trode a Highland moor, or dived into an Indian jungle, had the goodness to supply me with.'

My rehearsal, however, though not absolutely and altogether to my taste, has prepared me in some measure for the less tempered and guarded sentence of the world. So a man must learn to encounter a foil before he confronts a sword ; and to take up my original simile, a horse must be accustomed to a *feu de joie* before you can ride him against a volley of balls. Well, Corporal Nym's philosophy is not the worst that has been preached, 'Things must be as they may.' If my lucubrations give pleasure, I may again require the attention of the courteous reader ; if not, here end the

CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE.

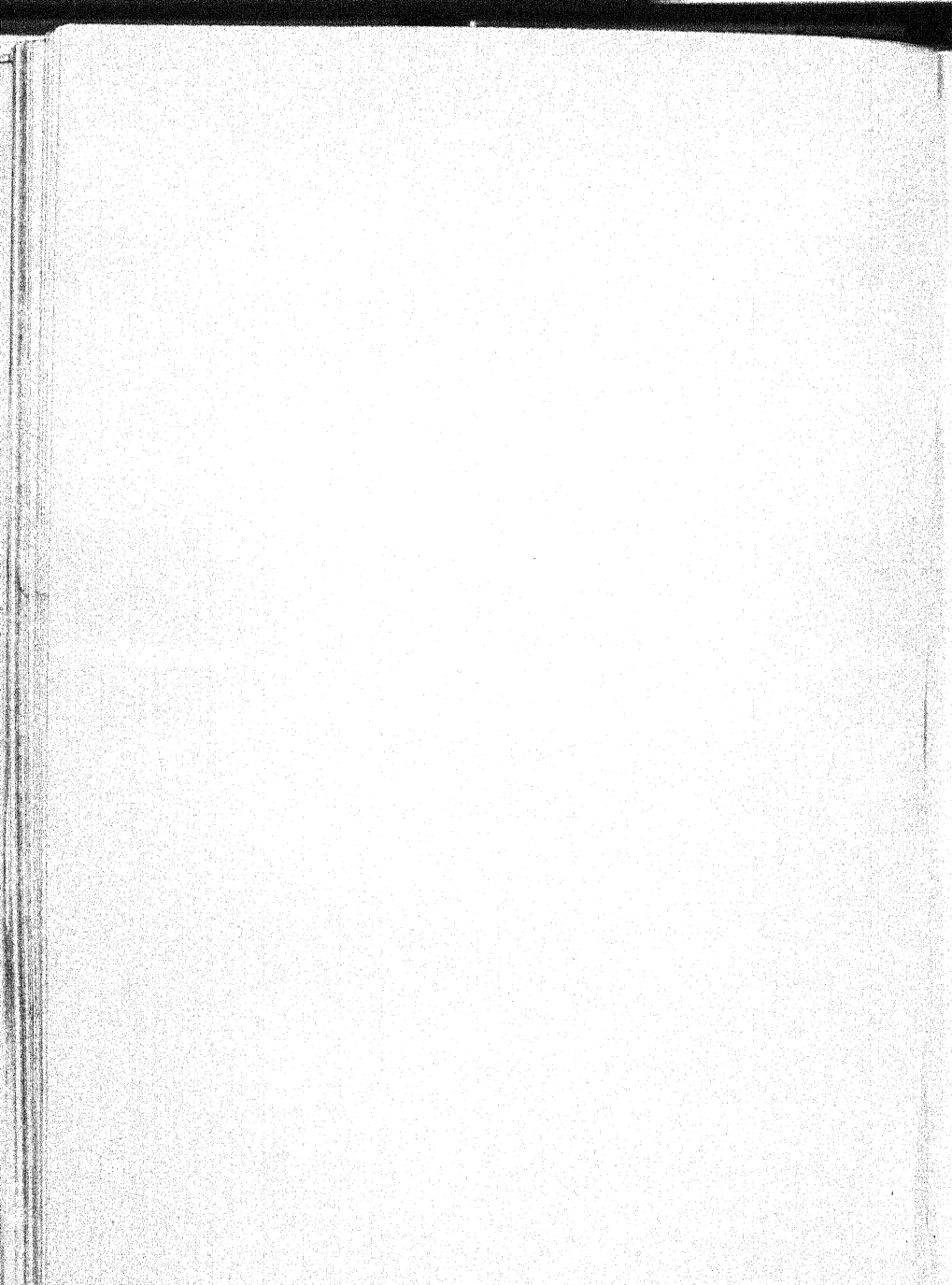
TALES OF MY LANDLORD

FOURTH AND LAST SERIES

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY

JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM

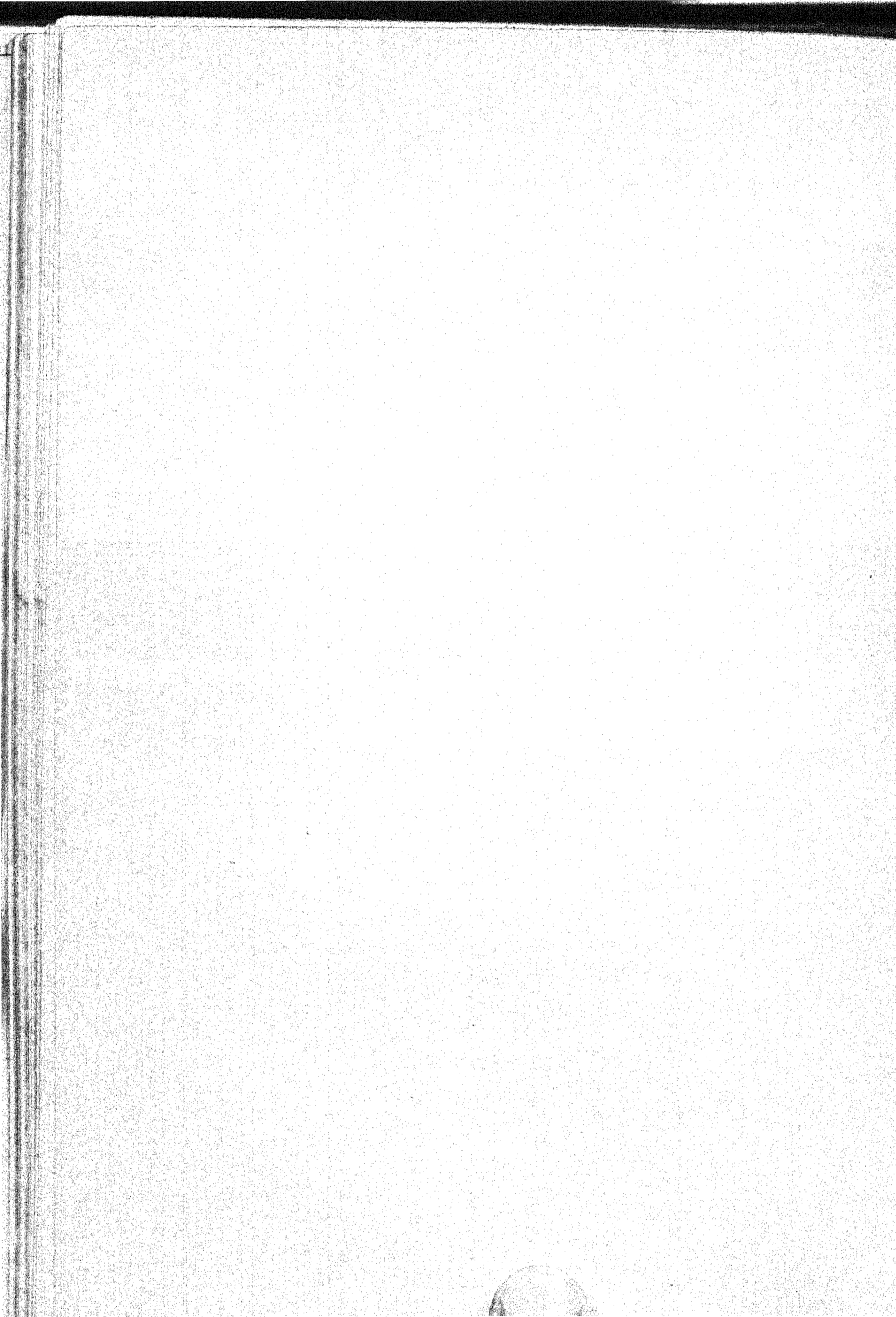
SCHOOLMASTER AND PARISH-CLERK OF GANDERCLEUCH



CASTLE DANGEROUS

As I stood by yon roofless tower,
Where the wa'flower scents the dewy air,
Where the howlet mourns in her ivy bower,
And tells the midnight moon her care ;
The winds were laid, the air was still,
The stars they shot along the sky,
The fox was howling on the hill,
And the distant echoing glens reply.

ROBERT BURNS.



INTRODUCTION TO CASTLE DANGEROUS

The following introduction to *Castle Dangerous* was forwarded by Sir Walter Scott from Naples in February 1832, together with some corrections of the text, and notes on localities mentioned in the Novel.

The materials for the Introduction must have been collected before he left Scotland, in September 1831; but in the hurry of preparing for his voyage he had not been able to arrange them so as to accompany the first edition of this Romance.

A few notes, supplied by the Editor, are placed within brackets.

THE incidents on which the ensuing Novel mainly turns are derived from the ancient metrical chronicle of *The Bruce*, by Archdeacon Barbour, and from *The History of the Houses of Douglas and Angus*, by David Hume of Godscroft; and are sustained by the immemorial tradition of the western parts of Scotland. They are so much in consonance with the spirit and manners of the troubled age to which they are referred, that I can see no reason for doubting their being founded in fact: the names, indeed, of numberless localities in the vicinity of Douglas Castle appear to attest, beyond suspicion, many even of the smallest circumstances embraced in the story of Godscroft.

Among all the associates of Robert the Bruce, in his great enterprise of rescuing Scotland from the power of Edward, the first place is universally conceded to James, the eighth Lord Douglas, to this day venerated by his countrymen as 'the Good Sir James':

And Gud Schyr James of Douglas,
That in his time sa worthy was,
That off his price and his bounté,
In fer landis renownyt was he. — BARBOUR.

The Good Sir James, the dreadful blacke Douglas,
That in his dayes so wise and worthie was,
Wha here, and on the infidels of Spain,
Such honour, praise, and triumphs did obtain. — GORDON.

From the time when the King of England refused to reinstate him, on his return from France, where he had received

the education of chivalry, in the extensive possessions of his family, which had been held forfeited by the exertions of his father, William the Hardy, the young knight of Douglas appears to have embraced the cause of Bruce with enthusiastic ardour, and to have adhered to the fortunes of his sovereign with unwearied fidelity and devotion. 'The Douglass,' says Hollinshed, 'was joyfully received of King Robert, in whose service he faithfully continued, both in peace and war, to his life's end. Though the surname and familie of the Douglasses was in some estimation of nobilitie before those daies, yet the rising thereof to honour chanced through this James Douglass; for, by meanes of his advancement, others of that lineage tooke occasion, by their singular manhood and noble prowess, shewed at sundrie times in defence of the realme, to grow to such height in authoritie and estimation, that their mightie puissance in mainrent,¹ lands, and great possessions at length was, through suspicion conceived by the kings that succeeded, the cause in part of their ruinous decay.'

In every narrative of the Scottish war of independence, a considerable space is devoted to those years of perilous adventure and suffering which were spent by the illustrious friend of Bruce in harassing the English detachments successively occupying his paternal territory, and in repeated and successful attempts to wrest the formidable fortress of Douglas Castle itself from their possession. In the English as well as Scotch Chronicles, and in Rymer's *Fœdera*, occur frequent notices of the different officers entrusted by Edward with the keeping of this renowned stronghold; especially Sir Robert de Clifford, ancestor of the heroic race of the Cliffords, Earls of Cumberland; his lieutenant, Sir Richard de Thurlewalle (written sometimes Thruswall), of Thirlwall Castle, on the Tipalt in Northumberland; and Sir John de Walton, the romantic story of whose love-pledge, to hold the Castle of Douglas for a year and day, or surrender all hope of obtaining his mistress's favour, with the tragic consequences softened in the Novel, is given at length in Godscroft, and has often been pointed out as one of the affecting passages in the chronicles of chivalry.²

The Author, before he had made much progress in this, probably the last of his Novels, undertook a journey to

¹ Vassalage.

² [The reader will find both this story and that of *Robert of Paris* in Sir W. Scott's essay on 'Chivalry,' published in 1818, in the Supplement to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. — E.]

Douglas Dale, for the purpose of examining the remains of the famous castle, the kirk of St. Bride of Douglas, the patron saint of that great family, and the various localities alluded to by Godscroft in his account of the early adventures of Good Sir James; but though he was fortunate enough to find a zealous and well-informed *cicerone* in Mr. Thomas Haddow, and had every assistance from the kindness of Mr. Alexander Finlay, the resident chamberlain of his friend, Lord Douglas, the state of his health at the time was so feeble, that he found himself incapable of pursuing his researches, as in better days he would have delighted to do, and was obliged to be contented with such a cursory view of scenes, in themselves most interesting, as could be snatched in a single morning, when any bodily exertion was painful. Mr. Haddow was attentive enough to forward subsequently some notes on the points which the Author had seemed desirous of investigating; but these did not reach him until, being obliged to prepare matters for a foreign excursion in quest of health and strength, he had been compelled to bring his work, such as it is, to a conclusion.

The remains of the old Castle of Douglas¹ are inconsiderable. They consist indeed of but one ruined tower, standing at a short distance from the modern mansion, which itself is only a fragment of the design on which the Duke of Douglas meant to reconstruct the edifice, after its last accidental destruction by fire. His Grace had kept in view the ancient prophecy that, as often as Douglas Castle might be destroyed, it should rise again in enlarged dimensions and improved splendour, and projected a pile of building which, if it had been completed, would have much exceeded any nobleman's residence then existing in Scotland, as indeed what has been finished, amounting to about one-eighth part of the plan, is sufficiently extensive for the accommodation of a large establishment, and contains some apartments the dimensions of which are magnificent. The situation is commanding; and though the Duke's successors have allowed the mansion to continue as he left it, great expense has been lavished on the environs, which now present a vast sweep of richly undulated woodland, stretching to the borders of the Cairntable mountains, repeatedly mentioned as the favourite retreat of the great ancestor of the family in the days of his hardship and persecution. There remains at the head of the adjoining *bourg* the choir of the ancient church of St. Bride, having beneath it

¹ See Note 3.

the vault which was used till lately as the burial-place of this princely race, and only abandoned when their stone and leaden coffins had accumulated, in the course of five or six hundred years, in such a way that it could accommodate no more. Here a silver case, containing the dust of what was once the brave heart of Good Sir James, is still pointed out; and in the dilapidated choir above appears, though in a sorely ruinous state, the once magnificent tomb of the warrior himself. After detailing the well-known circumstances of Sir James's death in Spain, 20th August 1330, where he fell, assisting the King of Arragon in an expedition against the Moors, when on his way from Scotland to Jerusalem, to which he was conveying the heart of Bruce, the old poet Barbour tells us that —

Quhen his men lang had mad murnyn,
Thai debowalyt him, and syne
Gert scher him swa, that mycht be tane
The flesch all haly fra the bane,
And the carioun thar in haly place
Erdyt, with rycht gret worschip, was.

The banys haue thai with them tane;
And syne ar to their schippis gane;
Syne towart Scotland held thair way,
And thar ar cummyn in full gret hy.
And the banys honorabilly.

In till the kyrk of Douglas war
Erdyt, with dule and mekill car.
Schyr Archebald his sone gert syn
Off alabastre, bath fair and fyne,
Ordane a tumbe sa richly
As it behowyt to swa worthy.

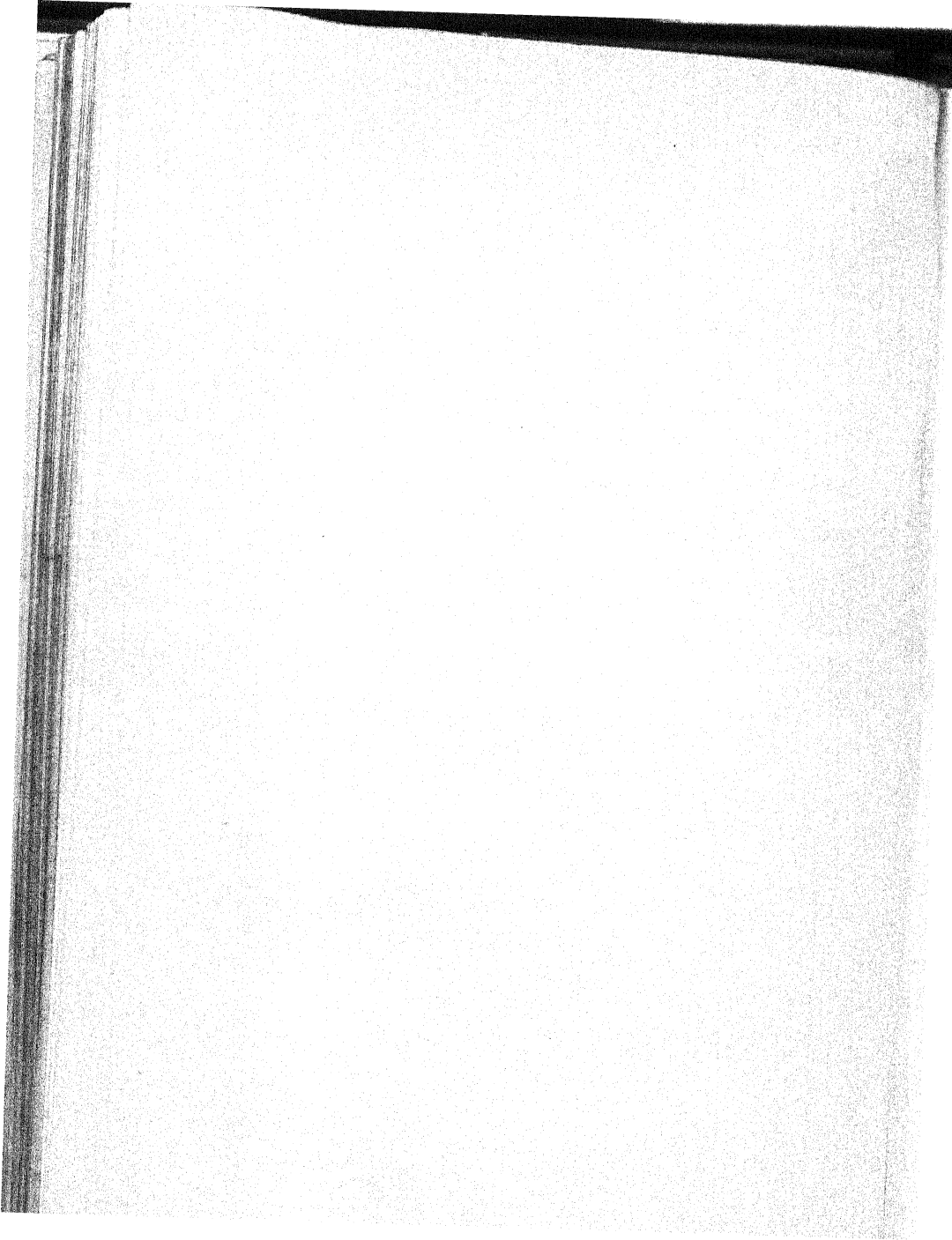
The monument is supposed to have been wantonly mutilated and defaced by a detachment of Cromwell's troops, who, as was their custom, converted the kirk of St. Bride of Douglas into a stable for their horses. Enough, however, remains to identify the resting-place of the great Sir James. The effigy, of dark stone, is cross-legged, marking his character as one who had died after performing the pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, and in actual conflict with the infidels of Spain; and the introduction of the HEART, adopted as an addition to the old arms of Douglas, in consequence of the knight's fulfilment of Bruce's dying injunction, appears, when taken in connexion with the posture of the figure, to set the question at rest. The monument, in its original state, must have been not inferior in any

respect to the best of the same period in Westminster Abbey; and the curious reader is referred for farther particulars of it to *The Sepulchral Antiquities of Great Britain*, by Edward Blore, F. S. A. (London, 4to, 1826), where may also be found interesting details of some of the other tombs and effigies in the cemetery of the first house of Douglas.

As considerable liberties have been taken with the historical incidents on which this novel is founded, it is due to the reader to place before him such extracts from Godscroft and Barbour as may enable him to correct any mis-impression. The passages introduced in the Appendix, from the ancient poem of *The Bruce*, will moreover gratify those who have not in their possession a copy of the text of Barbour, as given in the valuable quarto edition of my learned friend Dr. Jamieson, as furnishing on the whole a favourable specimen of the style and manner of a venerable classic who wrote when Scotland was still full of the fame and glory of her liberators from the yoke of Plantagenet, and especially of Sir James Douglas, 'of whom,' says Godscroft, 'we will not omit here (to shut up all) the judgment of those times concerning him, in a rude verse indeed, yet such as beareth witness of his true magnanimity and invincible mind in either fortune:—

Good Sir James Douglas, who wise, and wight, and worthy was,
Was never overglad in no winning, nor yet oversad for no tineing;
Good fortune and evil chance he weighed both in one balance.'

W. S.



CASTLE DANGEROUS

CHAPTER I

Hosts have been known at that dread sound to yield,
And, Douglas dead, his name hath won the field.

JOHN HOME.

IT was at the close of an early spring day, when nature, in a cold province of Scotland, was reviving from her winter's sleep, and the air at least, though not the vegetation, gave promise of an abatement of the rigour of the season, that two travellers, whose appearance at that early period sufficiently announced their wandering character, which, in general, secured a free passage even through a dangerous country, were seen coming from the south-westward, within a few miles of the Castle of Douglas, and seemed to be holding their course in the direction of the river of that name, whose dale afforded a species of approach to that memorable feudal fortress. The stream, small in comparison to the extent of its fame, served as a kind of drain to the country in its neighbourhood, and at the same time afforded the means of a rough road to the castle and village. The high lords to whom the castle had for ages belonged might, had they chosen, have made this access a great deal smoother and more convenient; but there had been as yet little or no exercise for those geniuses who have taught all the world that it is better to take the more circuitous road round the base of a hill than the direct course of ascending it on the one side and descending it directly on the other, without yielding a single step to render the passage more easy to the traveller; still less were those mysteries dreamed of which MacAdam has of late days expounded. But, indeed, to what purpose should the ancient Douglasses have employed his principles, even if they had known them in ever so much per-

fection? Wheel-carriages, except of the most clumsy description, and for the most simple operations of agriculture, were totally unknown. Even the most delicate female had no resource save a horse, or, in case of sore infirmity, a litter. The men used their own sturdy limbs, or hardy horses, to transport themselves from place to place; and travellers, females in particular, experienced no small inconvenience from the rugged nature of the country. A swollen torrent sometimes crossed their path, and compelled them to wait until the waters had abated their frenzy. The bank of a small river was occasionally torn away by the effects of a thunderstorm, a recent inundation, or the like convulsions of nature; and the wayfarer relied upon his knowledge of the district, or obtained the best local information in his power, how to direct his path so as to surmount such untoward obstacles.

The Douglas issues from an amphitheatre of mountains which bounds the valley to the south-west, from whose contributions, and the aid of sudden storms, it receives its scanty supplies. The general aspect of the country is that of the pastoral hills of the south of Scotland, forming, as is usual, bleak and wild farms, many of which had, at no great length of time from the date of the story, been covered with trees, as some of them still attest by bearing the name of 'shaw,' that is, wild natural wood. The neighbourhood of the Douglas water itself was flat land, capable of bearing strong crops of oats and rye, supplying the inhabitants with what they required of these productions. At no great distance from the edge of the river, a few special spots excepted, the soil capable of agriculture was more and more mixed with the pastoral and woodland country, till both terminated in desolate and partly inaccessible moorlands.

Above all, it was war-time, and of necessity all circumstances of mere convenience were obliged to give way to a paramount sense of danger; the inhabitants, therefore, instead of trying to amend the paths which connected them with other districts, were thankful that the natural difficulties which surrounded them rendered it unnecessary to break up or to fortify the access from more open countries. Their wants, with a very few exceptions, were completely supplied, as we have already said, by the rude and scanty produce of their own mountains and 'holms,'¹ the last of which served for the exercise of their

¹ *Holms*, or flat plains, by the sides of the brooks and rivers, termed in the south, *Ings*.

limited agriculture, while the better part of the mountains and forest glens produced pasture for their herds and flocks. The recesses of the unexplored depths of these silvan retreats being seldom disturbed, especially since the lords of the district had laid aside, during this time of strife, their constant occupation of hunting, the various kinds of game had increased of late very considerably; so that not only in crossing the rougher parts of the hilly and desolate country we are describing different varieties of deer were occasionally seen, but even the wild cattle peculiar to Scotland sometimes showed themselves, and other animals, which indicated the irregular and disordered state of the period. The wildcat was frequently surprised in the dark ravines or the swampy thickets; and the wolf, already a stranger to the more populous districts of the Lothians, here maintained his ground against the encroachments of man, and was still himself a terror to those by whom he was finally to be extirpated. In winter especially — and winter was hardly yet past — these savage animals were wont to be driven to extremity for lack of food, and used to frequent, in dangerous numbers, the battlefield, the deserted churchyard — nay, sometimes the abodes of living men, there to watch for children, their defenceless prey, with as much familiarity as the fox nowadays will venture to prowl near the mistress's¹ poultry-yard.

From what we have said, our readers, if they have made — as who in these days has not? — the Scottish tour, will be able to form a tolerably just idea of the wilder and upper part of Douglas Dale, during the earlier period of the 14th century. The setting sun cast his gleams along a moorland country, which to the westward broke into larger swells, terminating in the mountains called the Larger and Lesser Cairn-table. The first of these is, as it were, the father of the hills in the neighbourhood, the source of an hundred streams, and by far the largest of the ridge, still holding in his dark bosom, and in the ravines with which his sides are ploughed, considerable remnants of those ancient forests with which all the high grounds of that quarter were once covered, and particularly the hills, in which the rivers — both those which run to the east and those which seek the west to discharge themselves into the Solway — hide, like so many hermits, their original and scanty sources.

The landscape was still illuminated by the reflection of the

¹ The good dame or wife of a respectable farmer is almost universally thus designated in Scotland.

evening sun, sometimes thrown back from pool or stream; sometimes resting on grey rocks, huge cumberers of the soil, which labour and agriculture have since removed; and sometimes contenting itself with gilding the banks of the stream, tinged alternately grey, green, or ruddy, as the ground itself consisted of rock, or grassy turf, or bare earthen mound, or looked at a distance like a rampart of dark red porphyry. Occasionally, too, the eye rested on the steep brown extent of moorland, as the sunbeam glanced back from the little tarn or mountain pool, whose lustre, like that of the eye in the human countenance, gives a life and vivacity to every feature around.

The elder and stouter of the two travellers whom we have mentioned was a person well, and even showily, dressed, according to the finery of the times, and bore at his back, as wandering minstrels were wont, a case, containing a small harp, rote, or viol, or some such species of musical instrument for accompanying the voice. The leathern case announced so much, although it proclaimed not the exact nature of the instrument. The colour of the traveller's doublet was blue, and that of his hose violet, with slashes which showed a lining of the same colour with the jerkin. A mantle ought, according to ordinary custom, to have covered this dress; but the heat of the sun, though the season was so early, had induced the wearer to fold up his cloak in small compass, and form it into a bundle, attached to the shoulders like the military great-coat of the infantry soldier of the present day. The neatness with which it was made up argued the precision of a practised traveller, who had been long accustomed to every resource which change of weather required. A great profusion of narrow ribands or points, constituting the loops with which our ancestors connected their doublet and hose, formed a kind of cordon, composed of knots of blue or violet, which surrounded the traveller's person, and thus assimilated in colour with the two garments which it was the office of these strings to combine. The bonnet usually worn with this showy dress was of that kind with which Henry the Eighth and his son, Edward the Sixth, are usually represented. It was more fitted, from the gay stuff of which it was composed, to appear in a public place than to encounter a storm of rain. It was partly-coloured, being made of different stripes of blue and violet; and the wearer arrogated a certain degree of gentility to himself, by wearing a plume of considerable dimensions of the same favourite colours. The features over which this feather

drooped were in no degree remarkable for peculiarity of expression. Yet in so desolate a country as the west of Scotland it would not have been easy to pass the man without more minute attention than he would have met with where there was more in the character of the scenery to arrest the gaze of the passengers.

A quick eye, a sociable look, seeming to say, 'Ay, look at me, I am a man worth noticing, and not unworthy your attention,' carried with it, nevertheless, an interpretation which might be thought favourable or otherwise, according to the character of the person whom the traveller met. A knight or soldier would merely have thought that he had met a merry fellow, who could sing a wild song, or tell a wild tale, and help to empty a flagon, with all the accomplishments necessary for a boon companion at an hostelry, except perhaps an alacrity at defraying his share of the reckoning. A churchman, on the other hand, might have thought he of the blue and violet was of too loose habits, and accustomed too little to limit himself within the boundaries of becoming mirth, to be fit society for one of his sacred calling. Yet the man of song had a certain steadiness of countenance, which seemed fitted to hold place in scenes of serious business as well as of gaiety. A wayfaring passenger of wealth, not at that time a numerous class, might have feared in him a professional robber, or one whom opportunity was very likely to convert into such; a female might have been apprehensive of uncivil treatment; and a youth, or timid person, might have thought of murder or such direful doings. Unless privately armed, however, the minstrel was ill-accounted for any dangerous occupation. His only visible weapon was a small crooked sword, like what we now call a hanger; and the state of the times would have justified any man, however peaceful his intentions, in being so far armed against the perils of the road.

If a glance at this man had in any respect prejudiced him in the opinion of those whom he met on his journey, a look at his companion would, so far as his character could be guessed at — for he was closely muffled up — have passed for an apology and warrant for his associate. The younger traveller was apparently in early youth, a soft and gentle boy, whose Slavonic gown, the appropriate dress of the pilgrim, he wore more closely drawn about him than the coldness of the weather seemed to authorise or recommend. His features, imperfectly seen under the hood of his pilgrim's dress, were prepossessing

in a high degree; and though he wore a walking-sword, it seemed rather to be in compliance with general fashion than from any violent purpose he did so. There were traces of sadness upon his brow, and of tears upon his cheeks; and his weariness was such as even his rougher companion seemed to sympathise with, while he privately participated also in the sorrow which left its marks upon a countenance so lovely. They spoke together, and the elder of the two, while he assumed the deferential air proper to a man of inferior rank addressing a superior, showed, in tone and gesture, something that amounted to interest and affection.

'Bertram, my friend,' said the younger of the two, 'how far are we still from Douglas Castle? We have already come farther than the twenty miles which thou didst say was the distance from Camnock — or how didst thou call the last hostelry which we left by daybreak?'

'Cumnock, my dearest lady — I beg ten thousand excuses — my gracious young lord.'

'Call me Augustine,' replied his comrade, 'if you mean to speak as is fittest for the time.'

'Nay, as for that,' said Bertram, 'if your ladyship can condescend to lay aside your quality, my own good-breeding is not so firmly sewed to me but that I can doff it and resume it again without its losing a stitch; and since your ladyship, to whom I am sworn in obedience, is pleased to command that I should treat you as my own son, shame it were to me if I were not to show you the affection of a father, more especially as I may well swear my great oath that I owe you the duty of such, though well I wot it has, in our case, been the lot of the parent to be maintained by the kindness and liberality of the child; for when was it that I hungered or thirsted, and the black stock¹ of Berkely did not relieve my wants?'

'I would have it so,' answered the young pilgrim — 'I would have it so. What use of the mountains of beef and the oceans of beer which they say our domains produce, if there is a hungry heart among our vassalage, or especially if thou, Bertram, who hast served as the minstrel of our house for more than twenty years, shouldst experience such a feeling?'

'Certes, lady,' answered Bertram, 'it would be like the catastrophe which is told of the baron of Fastenough, when his last mouse was starved to death in the very pantry; and if I escape this journey without such a calamity, I shall think

¹ The table dormant, which stood in a baron's hall, was often so designated.

myself out of reach of thirst or famine for the whole of my life.'

'Thou hast suffered already once or twice by these attacks, my poor friend,' said the lady.

'It is little,' answered Bertram, 'anything that I have suffered; and I were ungrateful to give the inconvenience of missing a breakfast, or making an untimely dinner, so serious a name. But then I hardly see how your ladyship can endure this gear much longer. You must yourself feel that the plodding along these high lands, of which the Scots give us such good measure in their miles, is no jesting matter; and as for Douglas Castle, why, it is still three good miles off.'

'The question then is,' quoth the lady, heaving a sigh, 'what we are to do when we have so far to travel, and when the castle gates must be locked long before we arrive there?'

'For that I will pledge my word,' answered Bertram. 'The gates of Douglas, under the keeping of Sir John de Walton, do not open so easily as those of the buttery hatch at our own castle when it is well oiled; and if your ladyship take my advice, you will turn southward ho, and in two days at farthest we shall be in a land where men's wants are provided for, as the inns proclaim it, with the least possible delay, and the secret of this little journey shall never be known to living mortal but ourselves, as sure as I am sworn minstrel and man of faith.'

'I thank thee for thy advice, mine honest Bertram,' said the lady, 'but I cannot profit by it. Should thy knowledge of these parts possess thee with an acquaintance with any decent house, whether it belong to rich or poor, I would willingly take quarters there, if I could obtain them from this time until to-morrow morning. The gates of Douglas Castle will then be open to guests of so peaceful an appearance as we carry with us, and — and — it will out — we might have time to make such applications to our toilet as might insure us a good reception, by drawing a comb through our locks, or such-like foppery.'

'Ah, madam!' said Bertram, 'were not Sir John de Walton in question, methinks I should venture to reply, that an unwashed brow, an unkempt head of hair, and a look far more saucy than your ladyship ever wears, or can wear, were the proper disguise to trick out that minstrel's boy whom you wish to represent in the present pageant.'

'Do you suffer your youthful pupils to be indeed so slovenly and so saucy, Bertram?' answered the lady. 'I for one will not

CHAPTER II

Rosalind. Well, this is the Forest of Arden.

Touchstone. Aye, now am I in Arden ; the more fool I. When I was at home I was in a better place ; but travellers must be content.

Rosalind. Aye, be so, good Touchstone. Look you, who comes here ; a young man and an old, in solemn talk.

As You Like It, Act II. Scene IV.

AS the travellers spoke together, they reached a turn of the path which presented a more extensive prospect than the broken face of the country had yet shown them. A valley, through which flowed a small tributary stream, exhibited the wild, but not unpleasant, features of 'a lone vale of green bracken,' here and there besprinkled with groups of alder-trees, of hazels, and of copse oak-wood, which had maintained their stations in the recesses of the valley, although they had vanished from the loftier and more exposed sides of the hills. The farm-house, or mansion-house, for, from its size and appearance, it might have been the one or the other, was a large but low building, and the walls of the outhouses were sufficiently strong to resist any band of casual depredators. There was nothing, however, which could withstand a more powerful force ; for, in a country laid waste by war, the farmer was then, as now, obliged to take his chance of the great evils attendant upon that state of things ; and his condition, never a very eligible one, was rendered considerably worse by the insecurity attending it. About half a mile farther was seen a Gothic building of very small extent, having a half-dismantled chapel, which the minstrel pronounced to be the abbey of St. Bride. 'The place,' he said, 'I understand, is allowed to subsist, as two or three old monks and as many nuns, whom it contains, are permitted by the English to serve God there, and sometimes to give relief to Scottish travellers ; and who have accordingly taken assurance with Sir John de Walton, and accepted as their superior a churchman on whom he thinks he can depend. But if these

guests happen to reveal any secrets, they are, by some means or other, believed to fly towards the English governor; and therefore, unless your ladyship's commands be positive, I think we had best not trust ourselves to their hospitality.'

'Of a surety, no,' said the lady, 'if thou canst provide me with lodgings where we shall have more prudent hosts.'

At this moment, two human forms were seen to approach the farm-house in a different direction from the travellers, and speaking so high, in a tone apparently of dispute, that the minstrel and his companion could distinguish their voices though the distance was considerable. Having screened his eyes with his hand for some minutes, Bertram at length exclaimed, 'By Our Lady, it is my old friend, Tom Dickson, sure enough! What can make him in such bad humour with the lad, who, I think, may be the little wild boy, his son Charles, who used to run about and plait rushes some twenty years ago? It is lucky, however, we have found our friends astir; for, I warrant, Tom hath a hearty piece of beef in the pot ere he goes to bed, and he must have changed his want if an old friend hath not his share; and who knows, had we come later, at what hour they may now find it convenient to drop latch and draw bolt so near a hostile garrison; for, if we call things by their right names, such is the proper term for an English garrison in the castle of a Scottish nobleman.'

'Foolish man,' answered the lady, 'thou judgest of Sir John de Walton as thou wouldst of some rude boor, to whom the opportunity of doing what he wills is a temptation and license to exercise cruelty and oppression. Now, I could plight you my word that, setting apart the quarrel of the kingdoms, which, of course, will be fought out in fair battle on both sides, you will find that English and Scottish, within this domain, and within the reach of Sir John de Walton's influence, live together as that same flock of sheep and goats do with the shepherd's dog—a foe from whom they fly upon certain occasions, but around whom they nevertheless eagerly gather for protection should a wolf happen to show himself.'

'It is not to your ladyship,' answered Bertram, 'that I should venture to state my opinion of such matters; but the young knight, when he is sheathed in armour, is a different being from him who feasts in halls among press of ladies; and he that feeds by another man's fireside, and when his landlord, of all men in the world, chances to be the Black Douglas, has reason to keep his eyes about him as he makes his meal. But

it were better I looked after our own evening refreshment than that I stood here gaping and talking about other folks' matters.' So saying, he called out in a thundering tone of voice, 'Dickson! — what ho, Thomas Dickson! will you not acknowledge an old friend, who is much disposed to trust his supper and night's lodging to your hospitality?'

The Scotchman, attracted by the call, looked first along the banks of the river, then upwards to the bare side of the hill, and at length cast his eyes upon the two figures who were descending from it.

As if he felt the night colder while he advanced from the more sheltered part of the valley to meet them, the Douglas Dale farmer wrapped closer around him the grey plaid which, from an early period, has been used by the shepherds of the south of Scotland, and the appearance of which gives a romantic air to the peasantry and middle classes; and which, although less brilliant and gaudy in its colours, is as picturesque in its arrangement as the more military tartan mantle of the Highlands. When they approached near to each other, the lady might observe that this friend of her guide was a stout athletic man, somewhat past the middle of life, and already showing marks of the approach, but none of the infirmities, of age, upon a countenance which had been exposed to many a storm. Sharp eyes, too, and a quick observation, exhibited signs of vigilance, acquired by one who had lived long in a country where he had constant occasion for looking around him with caution. His features were still swollen with displeasure; and the handsome young man who attended him seemed to be discontented, like one who had undergone no gentle marks of his father's indignation, and who, from the sullen expression which mingled with an appearance of shame on his countenance, seemed at once affected by anger and remorse.

'Do you not remember me, old friend?' said Bertram, as they approached within a distance for communing; 'or have the twenty years which have marched over us since we met carried along with them all remembrance of Bertram, the English minstrel?'

'In troth,' answered the Scot, 'it is not for want of plenty of your countrymen to keep you in my remembrance, and I have hardly heard one of them so much as whistle

Hey, now the day dawns,

but it has recalled some note of your blithe rebeck; and yet

such animals are we, that I had forgot the mien of my old friend, and scarcely knew him at a distance. But we have had trouble lately : there are a thousand of your countrymen that keep garrison in the Perilous Castle of Douglas yonder, as well as in other places through the vale, and that is but a woeful sight for a true Scotchman ; even my own poor house has not escaped the dignity of a garrison of a man-at-arms, besides two or three archer knaves, and one or two slips of mischievous boys called pages, and so forth, who will not let a man say, "this is my own," by his own fireside. Do not, therefore, think hardly of me, old comrade, if I show you a welcome something colder than you might expect from a friend of other days ; for, by St. Bride of Douglas, I have scarcely anything left to which I can say welcome.'

'Small welcome will serve,' said Bertram. 'My son, make thy reverence to thy father's old friend. Augustine is learning my joyous trade, but he will need some practice ere he can endure its fatigues. If you could give him some little matter of food, and a quiet bed for the night, there's no fear but that we shall both do well enough ; for I daresay when you travel with my friend Charles there — if that tall youth chance to be my old acquaintance Charles — you will find yourself accommodated when his wants are once well provided for.'

'Nay, the foul fiend take me if I do,' answered the Scottish husbandman. 'I know not what the lads of this day are made of — not of the same clay as their fathers to be sure — not sprung from the heather, which fears neither wind nor rain, but from some delicate plant of a foreign country, which will not thrive unless it be nourished under glass, with a murrain to it ! The good Lord of Douglas — I have been his henchman, and can vouch for it — did not in his pagehood desire such food and lodging as, in the present day, will hardly satisfy such a lad as your friend Charles.'

'Nay,' said Bertram, 'it is not that my Augustine is over nice ; but, for other reasons, I must request of you a bed to himself : he hath of late been unwell.'

'Ay, I understand,' said Dickson, 'your son hath had a touch of that illness which terminates so frequently in the black death you English folk die of ? We hear much of the havoc it has made to the southward. Comes it hitherward ?'

Bertram nodded.

'Well, my father's house,' continued the farmer, 'hath more rooms than one, and your son shall have one well aired and

comfortable; and for supper, ye shall have a part of what is prepared for your countrymen, though I would rather have their room than their company. Since I am bound to feed a score of them, they will not dispute the claim of such a skilful minstrel as thou art to a night's hospitality. I am ashamed to say that I must do their bidding even in my own house. Well-a-day, if my good lord were in possession of his own, I have heart and hand enough to turn the whole of them out of my house, like — like —

'To speak plainly,' said Bertram, 'like a Southern strolling gang from Redesdale, whom I have seen you fling out of your house like a litter of blind puppies, when not one of them looked behind to see who had done him the courtesy until he was half-way to Cairntable.'

'Ay,' answered the Scotchman, drawing himself up at least six inches taller than before; 'then I had a house of my own, and a cause and an arm to keep it. Now I am — what signifies it what I am? — the noblest lord in Scotland is little better.'

'Truly, friend,' said Bertram, 'now you view this matter in a rational light. I do not say that the wisest, the richest, or the strongest man in this world has any right to tyrannise over his neighbour, because he is the more weak, ignorant, and the poorer; but yet, if he does enter into such a controversy, he must submit to the course of nature, and that will always give the advantage in the tide of battle to wealth, strength, and health.'

'With permission, however,' answered Dickson, 'the weaker party, if he use his faculties to the utmost, may, in the long-run, obtain revenge upon the author of his sufferings, which would be at least compensation for his temporary submission; and he acts simply as a man, and most foolishly as a Scotchman, whether he sustain these wrongs with the insensibility of an idiot or whether he endeavour to revenge them before Heaven's appointed time has arrived. But if I talk thus I shall scare you, as I have scared some of your countrymen, from accepting a meal of meat and a night's lodging in a house where you might be called with the morning to a bloody settlement of a national quarrel.'

'Never mind,' said Bertram, 'we have been known to each other of old; and I am no more afraid of meeting unkindness in your house than you expect me to come here for the purpose of adding to the injuries of which you complain.'

'So be it,' said Dickson; 'and you, my old friend, are as

welcome to my abode as when it never held any guest save of my own inviting. And you, my young friend, Master Augustine, shall be looked after as well as if you came with a gay brow and a light cheek, such as best becomes the gay science.'

'But wherefore, may I ask,' said Bertram, 'so much displeased but now at my young friend Charles?'

The youth answered before his father had time to speak. 'My father, good sir, may put what show upon it he will, but shrewd and wise men wax weak in the brain in these troublous times. He saw two or three wolves seize upon three of our choicest wethers; and because I shouted to give the alarm to the English garrison, he was angry as if he could have murdered me—just for saving the sheep from the jaws that would have devoured them.'

'This is a strange account of thee, old friend,' said Bertram. 'Dost thou connive with the wolves in robbing thine own fold?'

'Why, let it pass if thou lovest me,' answered the countryman: 'Charles could tell thee something nearer the truth if he had a mind; but for the present let it pass.'

The minstrel, perceiving that the Scotchman was fretted and embarrassed with the subject, pressed it no farther.

At this moment, in crossing the threshold of Thomas Dickson's house, they were greeted with sounds from two English soldiers within. 'Quiet, Anthony,' said one voice—'quiet, man! for the sake of common sense, if not common manners; Robin Hood himself never sat down to his board ere the roast was ready.'

'Ready!' quoth another rough voice; 'it is roasting to rags, and small had been the knave Dickson's share, even of these rags, had it not been the express orders of the worshipful Sir John de Walton that the soldiers who lie at outposts should afford to the inmates such provisions as are not necessary for their own subsistence.'

'Hush, Anthony—hush, for shame!' replied his fellow-soldier, 'if ever I heard our host's step, I heard it this instant; so give over thy grumbling, since our captain, as we all know, hath prohibited, under strict penalties, all quarrels between his followers and the people of the country.'

'I am sure,' replied Anthony, 'that I have ministered occasion to none; but I would I were equally certain of the good meaning of this sullen-browed Thomas Dickson towards the English soldiers, for I seldom go to bed in this dungeon of a

house but I expect my throat will gape as wide as a thirsty oyster before I awaken. Here he comes, however,' added Anthony, sinking his sharp tones as he spoke; 'and I hope to be excommunicated if he has not brought with him that mad animal, his son Charles, and two other strangers, hungry enough, I'll be sworn, to eat up the whole supper, if they do us no other injury.'

'Shame of thyself, Anthony,' repeated his comrade; 'a good archer thou as ever wore Kendal green, and yet affect to be frightened for two tired travellers, and alarmed for the inroad their hunger may make on the night's meal. There are four or five of us here; we have our bows and our bills within reach, and scorn to be chased from our supper, or cheated out of our share of it, by a dozen Scotchmen, whether stationary or strollers. How say'st thou?' he added, turning to Dickson — 'how say ye, quartermaster? it is no secret that, by the directions given to our post, we must inquire into the occupations of such guests as you may receive besides ourselves, your unwilling inmates; you are as ready for supper, I warrant, as supper is for you, and I will only delay you and my friend Anthony, who becomes dreadfully impatient, until you answer two or three questions which you wot of.'

'Bend-the-bow,' answered Dickson, 'thou art a civil fellow; and although it is something hard to be constrained to give an account of one's friends, because they chance to quarter in one's own house for a night or two, yet I must submit to the times, and make no vain opposition. You may mark down in your breviary there that, upon the fourteenth day before Palm Sunday, Thomas Dickson brought to his house of Hazelside, in which you hold garrison, by orders from the English governor, Sir John de Walton, two strangers, to whom the said Thomas Dickson had promised refreshment and a bed for the evening, if it be lawful at this time and place.'

'But what are they — these strangers?' said Anthony, somewhat sharply.

'A fine world the while,' murmured Thomas Dickson, 'that an honest man should be forced to answer the questions of every paltry companion!' But he mitigated his voice and proceeded — 'The eldest of my guests is Bertram, an ancient English minstrel, who is bound on his own errand to the Castle of Douglas, and will communicate what he has to say of news to Sir John de Walton himself. I have known him for twenty years, and never heard anything of him save that he was good

man and true. The younger stranger is his son, a lad recovering from the English disorder, which has been raging far and wide in Westmoreland and Cumberland.'

'Tell me,' said Bend-the-Bow, 'this same Bertram, was he not about a year since in the service of some noble lady in our own country?'

'I have heard so,' answered Dickson.

'We shall, in that case, I think, incur little danger,' replied Bend-the-Bow, 'by allowing this old man and his son to proceed on their journey to the castle.'

'You are my elder and my better,' answered Anthony; 'but I may remind you that it is not so clearly our duty to give free passage into a garrison of a thousand men of all ranks to a youth who has been so lately attacked by a contagious disorder; and I question if our commander would not rather hear that the Black Douglas, with a hundred devils as black as himself, since such is his colour, had taken possession of the outpost of Hazelside with sword and battle-axe than that one person suffering under this fell sickness had entered peaceably, and by the opened wicket of the castle.'

'There is something in what thou sayest, Anthony,' replied his comrade; 'and considering that our governor, since he has undertaken the troublesome job of keeping a castle which is esteemed so much more dangerous than any other within Scotland, has become one of the most cautious and jealous men in the world, we had better, I think, inform him of the circumstance, and take his commands how the stripling is to be dealt with.'

'Content am I,' said the archer; 'and first, methinks, I would just, in order to show that we know what belongs to such a case, ask the stripling a few questions, as how long he has been ill, by what physicians he has been attended, when he was cured, and how his cure is certified, etc.'

'True, brother,' said Bend-the-Bow. 'Thou hearest, minstrel, we would ask thy son some questions. What has become of him? He was in this apartment but now.'

'So please you,' answered Bertram, 'he did but pass through the apartment. Mr. Thomas Dickson, at my entreaty, as well as in respectful reverence to your honour's health, carried him through the room without tarrance, judging his own bed-chamber the fittest place for a young man recovering from a severe illness, and after a day of no small fatigue.'

'Well,' answered the elder archer, 'though it is uncommon for men who, like us, live by bow-string and quiver, to meddle

with interrogations and examinations ; yet, as the case stands, we must make some inquiries of your son ere we permit him to set forth to the Castle of Douglas, where you say his errand leads him'

'Rather my errand, noble sir,' said the minstrel, 'than that of the young man himself.'

'If such be the case,' answered Bend-the-Bow, 'we may sufficiently do our duty by sending yourself, with the first grey light of dawn, to the castle, and letting your son remain in bed, which I warrant is the fittest place for him, until we shall receive Sir John de Walton's commands whether he is to be brought onward or not.'

'And we may as well,' said Anthony, 'since we are to have this man's company at supper, make him acquainted with the rules of the out garrison stationed here for the time.' So saying, he pulled a scroll from his leathern pouch, and said, 'Minstrel, canst thou read?'

'It becomes my calling,' said the minstrel.

'It has nothing to do with mine, though,' answered the archer, 'and therefore do thou read these regulations aloud ; for, since I do not comprehend these characters by sight, I lose no chance of having them read over to me as often as I can, that I may fix their sense in my memory. So beware that thou readest the words letter for letter as they are set down ; for thou dost so at thy peril, sir minstrel, if thou readest not like a true man.'

'On my minstrel word,' said Bertram, and began to read excessively slow, for he wished to gain a little time for consideration, which he foresaw would be necessary to prevent his being separated from his mistress, which was likely to occasion her much anxiety and distress. He therefore began thus : "Outpost at Hazelside,¹ the steading of Goodman Thomas Dickson." Ay, Thomas, and is thy house so called?'

'It is the ancient name of the steading,' said the Scot, 'being surrounded by a hazel-shaw, or thicket.'

'Hold your chattering tongue, minstrel,' said Anthony, 'and proceed, as you value that or your ears, which you seem disposed to make less use of.'

"His garrison," proceeded the minstrel, reading, "'consists of a lance with its furniture." What, then, a lance, in other words, a belted knight, commands this party?'

'T is no concern of thine,' said the archer.

¹ See Note 4.

'But it is,' answered the minstrel: 'we have a right to be examined by the highest person in presence.'

'I will show thee, thou rascal,' said the archer, starting up, 'that I am lance enough for thee to reply to, and I will break thy head if thou say'st a word more.'

'Take care, brother Anthony,' said his comrade, 'we are to use travellers courteously — and, with your leave, those travellers best who come from our native land.'

'It is even so stated here,' said the minstrel, and he proceeded to read — "'The watch at this outpost of Hazelside shall stop and examine all travellers passing by the said station, suffering such to pass onwards to the town of Douglas, or to Douglas Castle, always interrogating them with civility, and detaining and turning them back if there arise matter of suspicion; but conducting themselves in all matters civilly and courteously to the people of the country, and to those who travel in it." You see, most excellent and valiant archer,' added the commentator Bertram, 'that courtesy and civility are, above all, recommended to your worship in your conduct towards the inhabitants, and those passengers who, like us, may chance to fall under your rules in such matters.'

'I am not to be told at this time of day,' said the archer, 'how to conduct myself in the discharge of my duties. Let me advise you, sir minstrel, to be frank and open in your answers to our inquiries, and you shall have no reason to complain.'

'I hope, at all events,' said the minstrel, 'to have your favour for my son, who is a delicate stripling, and not accustomed to play his part among the crew which inhabit this wild world.'

'Well,' continued the elder and more civil of the two archers, 'if thy son be a novice in this terrestrial navigation, I warrant that thou, my friend, from thy look and manner of speech, hast enough of skill to use thy compass. To comfort thee, although thou must thyself answer the questions of our governor or deputy-governor, in order that he may see there is no offence in thee, I think there may be permission granted for thy son's residing here in the convent hard by — where the nuns, by the way, are as old as the monks, and have nearly as long beards, so thou mayst be easy about thy son's morals — until thou hast done thy business at Douglas Castle, and art ready to resume thy journey.'

'If such permission,' said the minstrel, 'can be obtained, I should be better pleased to leave him at the abbey, and go

myself, in the first place, to take the directions of your commanding-officer.'

'Certainly,' answered the archer, 'that will be the safest and best way; and with a piece or two of money thou mayst secure the protection of the abbot.'

'Thou say'st well,' answered the minstrel; 'I have known life, I have known every stile, gap, pathway, and pass of this wilderness of ours for some thirty years; and he that cannot steer his course fairly through it like an able seaman, after having served such an apprenticeship, can hardly ever be taught, were a century to be given him to learn it in.'

'Since thou art so expert a mariner,' answered the archer Anthony, 'thou hast, I warrant me, met in thy wanderings a potation called a morning's draught, which they who are conducted by others where they themselves lack experience are used to bestow upon those who undertake the task of guide upon such an occasion?'

'I understand you, sir,' quoth the minstrel; 'and although money, or "drink-geld," as the Fleming calls it, is rather a scarce commodity in the purse of one of my calling, yet, according to my feeble ability, thou shalt have no cause to complain that thine eyes or those of thy comrades have been damaged by a Scottish mist while we can find an English coin to pay for the good liquor which should wash them clear.'

'Content,' said the archer; 'we now understand each other, and if difficulties arise on the road, thou shalt not want the countenance of Anthony to sail triumphantly through them. But thou hadst better let thy son know soon of the early visit to the abbot to-morrow, for thou mayst guess that we cannot and dare not delay our departure for the convent a minute after the eastern sky is ruddy; and, with other infirmities, young men often are prone to laziness and a love of ease.'

'Thou shalt have no reason to think so,' answered the minstrel: 'not the lark himself, when waked by the first ray peeping over the black cloud, springs more lightly to the sky than will my Augustine answer the same brilliant summons. And now we understand each other, I would only further pray you to forbear light talk while my son is in your company, — a boy of innocent life, and timid in conversation.'

'Nay, jolly minstrel,' said the elder archer, 'thou givest us here too gross an example of Satan reproving sin. If thou hast followed thy craft for twenty years, as thou pretendest,

thy son, having kept thee company since childhood, must by this time be fit to open a school to teach even devils the practice of the seven deadly sins, of which none know the theory if those of the gay science are lacking.'

'Truly, comrade, thou speakest well,' answered Bertram, 'and I acknowledge that we minstrels are too much to blame in this matter. Nevertheless, in good sooth, the fault is not one of which I myself am particularly guilty; on the contrary, I think that he who would wish to have his own hair honoured when time has strewed it with silver should so rein his mirth when in the presence of the young as may show in what respect he holds innocence. I will, therefore, with your permission, speak a word to Augustine, that to-morrow we must be on foot early.'

'Do so, my friend,' said the English soldier; 'and do the same the more speedily that our poor supper is still awaiting until thou art ready to partake of it.'

'To which, I promise thee,' said Bertram, 'I am disposed to entertain no delay.'

'Follow me, then,' said Dickson, 'and I will show thee where this young bird of thine has his nest.'

Their host accordingly tripped up the wooden stair, and tapped at a door, which he thus indicated was that of his younger guest.

'Your father,' continued he, as the door opened, 'would speak with you, Master Augustine.'

'Excuse me, my host,' answered Augustine; 'the truth is, that this room being directly above your eating-chamber, and the flooring not in the best possible repair, I have been compelled to the unhandsome practice of eavesdropping, and not a word has escaped me that passed concerning my proposed residence at the abbey, our journey to-morrow, and the somewhat early hour at which I must shake off sloth, and, according to thy expression, fly down from the roost.'

'And how dost thou relish,' said Dickson, 'being left with the abbot of St. Bride's little flock here?'

'Why, well,' said the youth, 'if the abbot is a man of respectability becoming his vocation, and not one of those swaggering churchmen who stretch out the sword, and bear themselves like rank soldiers in these troublous times.'

'For that, young master,' said Dickson, 'if you let him put his hand deep enough into your purse, he will hardly quarrel with anything.'

'Then I will leave him to my father,' replied Augustine, 'who will not grudge him anything he asks in reason.'

'In that case,' replied the Scotchman, 'you may trust to our abbot for good accommodation; and so both sides are pleased.'

'It is well, my son,' said Bertram, who now joined in the conversation; 'and that thou mayst be ready for thy early travelling, I shall presently get our host to send thee some food, after partaking of which thou shouldst go to bed and sleep off the fatigue of to-day, since to-morrow will bring work for itself.'

'And as for thy engagement to these honest archers,' answered Augustine, 'I hope you will be able to do what will give pleasure to our guides, if they are disposed to be civil and true men.'

'God bless thee, my child!' answered Bertram: 'thou knowest already what would drag after thy beck all the English archers that were ever on this side of the Solway. There is no fear of a grey-goose shaft, if you sing a *réveillez* like to that which chimed even now from that silken nest of dainty young goldfinches.'

'Hold me as in readiness, then,' said the seeming youth, 'when you depart to-morrow morning. I am within hearing, I suppose, of the bells of St. Bride's chapel, and have no fear, through my sloth, of keeping you or your company waiting.'

'Good-night, and God bless thee, my child!' again said the minstrel; 'remember that your father sleeps not far distant, and on the slightest alarm will not fail to be with you. I need scarce bid thee recommend thyself, meantime, to the great Being who is the friend and father of us all.'

The pilgrim thanked his supposed father for his evening blessing, and the visitors withdrew without farther speech at the time, leaving the young lady to those engrossing fears which, the novelty of her situation and the native delicacy of her sex being considered, naturally thronged upon her.

The tramp of a horse's foot was not long after heard at the house of Hazelside, and the rider was welcomed by its garrison with marks of respect. Bertram understood so much as to discover from the conversation of the warders that this late arrival was Aymer de Valence, the knight who commanded the little party, and to the furniture of whose lance, as it was technically called, belonged the archers with whom we have already been acquainted, a man-at-arms or two, a certain proportion of pages or grooms, and, in short, the command and

guidance of the garrison at Thomas Dickson's, while in rank he was deputy-governor of Douglas Castle.

To prevent all suspicion respecting himself and his companion, as well as the risk of the latter being disturbed, the minstrel thought it proper to present himself to the inspection of this knight, the great authority of the little place. He found him, with as little scruple as the archers heretofore, making a supper of the relics of the roast-beef.

Before this young knight Bertram underwent an examination, while an old soldier took down in writing such items of information as the examinee thought proper to express in his replies, both with regard to the minutiae of his present journey, his business at Castle Douglas, and his route when that business should be accomplished—a much more minute examination, in a word, than he had hitherto undergone by the archers, or perhaps than was quite agreeable to him, being encumbered with at least the knowledge of one secret, whatever more. Not that this new examiner had anything stern or severe in his looks or his questions. As to the first, he was mild, gentle, and 'meek as a maid,' and possessed exactly of the courteous manners ascribed by our father Chaucer to the pattern of chivalry whom he describes upon his pilgrimage to Canterbury. But, with all his gentleness, De Valence showed a great degree of acuteness and accuracy in his queries; and well pleased was Bertram that the young knight did not insist upon seeing his supposed son, although even in that case his ready wit had resolved, like a seaman in a tempest, to sacrifice one part to preserve the rest. He was not, however, driven to this extremity, being treated by Sir Aymer with that degree of courtesy which in that age men of song were in general thought entitled to. The knight kindly and liberally consented to the lad's remaining in the convent, as a fit and quiet residence for a stripling and an invalid, until Sir John de Walton should express his pleasure on the subject; and Sir Aymer consented to this arrangement the more willingly, as it averted all possible danger of bringing disease into the English garrison.

By the young knight's order, all in Dickson's house were despatched earlier to rest than usual; the matin bell of the neighbouring chapel being the signal for their assembly by day-break. They rendezvoused accordingly, and proceeded to St. Bride's, where they heard mass, after which an interview took place between the abbot Jerome and the minstrel, in which the former undertook, with the permission of De Valence, to receive

Augustine into his abbey as a guest for a few days, less or more, and for which Bertram promised an acknowledgment in name of alms, which was amply satisfactory.

'So be it,' said Bertram, taking leave of his supposed son; 'rely on it I will not tarry a day longer at Douglas Castle than shall suffice for transacting my business there, which is to look after the old books you wot of, and I will speedily return for thee to the abbey of St. Bride, to resume in company our journey homeward.'

'O, father,' replied the youth, with a smile, 'I fear, if you get among romances and chronicles, you will be so earnest in your researches that you will forget poor Augustine and his concerns.'

'Never fear me, Augustine,' said the old man, making the motion of throwing a kiss towards the boy; 'thou art good and virtuous, and Heaven will not neglect thee were thy father unnatural enough to do so. Believe me, all the old songs since Merlin's day shall not make me forget thee.'

Thus they separated, the minstrel, with the English knight and his retinue, to move towards the castle, and the youth in dutiful attendance on the venerable abbot, who was delighted to find that his guest's thoughts turned rather upon spiritual things than on the morning repast, of the approach of which he could not help being himself sensible.

CHAPTER III

The night, methinks, is but the daylight sick,
It looks a little paler; 't is a day
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Merchant of Venice.

TO facilitate the progress of the party on its way to Douglas Castle, the knight of Valence offered the minstrel the convenience of a horse, which the fatigues of yesterday made him gladly accept. Any one acquainted with equestrian exercise is aware that no means of refreshment carries away the sense of fatigue from over-walking so easily as the exchange to riding, which calls into play another set of muscles, and leaves those which have been over-exerted an opportunity of resting through change of motion more completely than they could in absolute repose. Sir Aymer de Valence was sheathed in armour, and mounted on his charger; two of the archers, a groom of mean rank, and a squire, who looked in his day for the honour of knighthood, completed the detachment, which seemed so disposed as to secure the minstrel from escape and to protect him against violence. 'Not,' said the young knight, addressing himself to Bertram, 'that there is usually danger in travelling in this country, any more than in the most quiet districts of England; but some disturbances, as you may have learnt, have broken out here within this last year, and have caused the garrison of Castle Douglas to maintain a stricter watch. But let us move on, for the complexion of the day is congenial with the original derivation of the name of the country, and the description of the chiefs to whom it belonged — *Sholto Dhu Glass* (see yon dark grey man), and dark grey will our route prove this morning, though by good luck it is not long.'

The morning was indeed what the original Gaelic words implied, a drizzly, dark, moist day; the mist had settled upon the hills, and unrolled itself upon brook, glade, and tarn, and the spring breeze was not powerful enough to raise the veil,

though, from the wild sounds which were heard occasionally on the ridges, and through the glens, it might be supposed to wait at a sense of its own inability. The route of the travellers was directed by the course which the river had ploughed for itself down the valley, the banks of which bore in general that dark grey livery which Sir Aymer de Valence had intimated to be the prevalent tint of the country. Some ineffectual struggles of the sun shot a ray here and there to salute the peaks of the hills; yet these were unable to surmount the dulness of a March morning, and, at so early an hour, produced a variety of shades, rather than a gleam of brightness, upon the eastern horizon. The view was monotonous and depressing, and apparently the good knight Aymer sought some amusement in occasional talk with Bertram, who, as was usual with his craft, possessed a fund of knowledge and a power of conversation well suited to pass away a dull morning. The minstrel, well pleased to pick up such information as he might be able concerning the present state of the country, embraced every opportunity of sustaining the dialogue.

‘I would speak with you, sir minstrel,’ said the young knight. ‘If thou dost not find the air of this morning too harsh for thine organs, heartily do I wish thou wouldst fairly tell me what can have induced thee, being, as thou seemest, a man of sense, to thrust thyself into a wild country like this, at such a time. And you, my masters,’ addressing the archers and the rest of the party, ‘methinks it would be as fitting and seeming if you reined back your steeds for a horse’s length or so, since I apprehend you can travel on your way without the pastime of minstrelsy.’ The bowmen took the hint, and fell back, but, as was expressed by their grumbling observations, by no means pleased that there seemed little chance of their overhearing what conversation should pass between the young knight and the minstrel, which proceeded as follows:—

‘I am, then, to understand, good minstrel,’ said the knight, ‘that you, who have in your time borne arms, and even followed St. George’s red-cross banner to the Holy Sepulchre, are so little tired of the danger attending our profession, that you feel yourself attracted unnecessarily to regions where the sword, for ever loose in its scabbard, is ready to start on the slightest provocation?’

‘It would be hard,’ replied the minstrel, bluntly, ‘to answer such a question in the affirmative; and yet, when you consider how nearly allied is his profession who celebrates deeds of arms

with that of the knight who performs them, your honour, I think, will hold it advisable that a minstrel desirous of doing his devoir should, like a young knight, seek the truth of adventures where it is to be found, and rather visit countries where the knowledge is preserved of high and noble deeds than those lazy and quiet realms in which men live indolently, and die ignobly in peace, or by sentence of law. You yourself, sir, and those like you, who hold life cheap in respect of glory, guide your course through this world on the very same principle which brings your poor rhyming servant Bertram from a far province of Merry England to this dark country of rugged Scotland called Douglas Dale. You long to see adventures worthy of notice, and I—under favour for naming us two in the same breath—seek a scanty and precarious, but not a dishonourable, living by preparing for immortality, as well as I can, the particulars of such exploits, especially the names of those who were the heroes of these actions. Each, therefore, labours in his vocation; nor can the one be justly wondered at more than the other, seeing that, if there be any difference in the degrees of danger to which both the hero and the poet are exposed, the courage, strength, arms, and address of the valiant knight render it safer for him to venture into scenes of peril than for the poor man of rhyme.'

'You say well,' answered the warrior; 'and although it is something of novelty to me to hear your craft represented as upon a level with my own mode of life, yet shame were it to say that the minstrel who toils so much to keep in memory the feats of gallant knights should not himself prefer fame to existence, and a single achievement of valour to a whole age without a name, or to affirm that he follows a mean and unworthy profession.'

'Your worship will then acknowledge,' said the minstrel, 'that it is a legitimate object in such as myself, who, simple as I am, have taken my regular degrees among the professors of the gay science at the capital town of Aigues-Mortes, to struggle forward into this Northern district, where I am well assured many things have happened which have been adapted to the harp by minstrels of great fame in ancient days, and have become the subject of lays which lie deposited in the library of Castle Douglas, where, unless copied over by some one who understands the old British characters and language, they must, with whatever they may contain, whether of entertainment or edification, be speedily lost to posterity. If these hidden treasures

were preserved and recorded by the minstrel art of my poor self and others, it might be held well to compensate for the risk of a chance blow of a broadsword, or the sweep of a brown-bill, received while I am engaged in collecting them; and I were unworthy of the name of a man, much more of an inventor or finder,¹ should I weigh the loss of life, a commodity always so uncertain, against the chance of that immortality which will survive in my lay after my broken voice and shivered harp shall no longer be able either to express tune or accompany tale.

'Certainly,' said Sir Aymer, 'having a heart to feel such a motive, you have an undoubted right to express it; nor should I have been in any degree disposed to question it had I found many minstrels prepared, like yourself, to prefer renown even to life itself, which most men think of greatly more consequence.'

'There are, indeed, noble sir,' replied Bertram, 'minstrels, and, with your reverence, even belted knights themselves, who do not sufficiently value that renown which is acquired at the risk of life. To such ignoble men we must leave their own reward: let us abandon to them earth, and the things of earth, since they cannot aspire to that glory which is the *best* reward of others.'

The minstrel uttered these last words with such enthusiasm that the knight drew his bridle and stood fronting Bertram, with his countenance kindling at the same theme, on which, after a short silence, he expressed himself with a like vivacity.

'Well fare thy heart, gay companion! I am happy to see there is still so much enthusiasm surviving in the world. Thou hast fairly won the minstrel groat; and if I do not pay it in conformity to my sense of thy merit, it shall be the fault of dame Fortune, who has graced my labours in these Scottish wars with the niggard pay of Scottish money. A gold piece or two there must be remaining of the ransom of one French knight whom chance threw into my hands, and that, my friend, shall surely be thine own; and hark thee, I, Aymer de Valence, who now speak to thee, am born of the noble house of Pembroke; and though now landless, shall, by the grace of Our Lady, have in time a fitting establishment, wherein I will find room for a minstrel like thee, if thy talents have not by that time found thee a better patron.'

'Thank thee, noble knight,' said the minstrel, 'as well for thy present intentions as I hope I shall for thy future per-

¹ See Maker or Trouveur. Note 5.

formance ; but I may say with truth that I have not the sordid inclination of many of my brethren.'

'He who partakes the true thirst of noble fame,' said the young knight, 'can have little room in his heart for the love of gold. But thou hast not yet told me, friend minstrel, what are the motives, in particular, which have attracted thy wandering steps to this wild country?'

'Were I to do so,' replied Bertram, rather desirous to avoid the question, as in some respects too nearly bordering on the secret purpose of his journey, 'it might sound like a studied panegyric on thine own bold deeds, sir knight, and those of your companions-in-arms ; and such adulation, minstrel as I am, I hate like an empty cup at a companion's lips. But let me say in few words, that Douglas Castle, and the deeds of valour which it has witnessed, have sounded wide through England ; nor is there a gallant knight or trusty minstrel whose heart does not throb at the name of the stronghold, which in former days the foot of an Englishman never entered, except in hospitality. There is a magic in the very names of Sir John de Walton and Sir Aymer de Valence, the gallant defenders of a place so often won back by its ancient lords, and with such circumstances of valour and cruelty that it bears in England the name of the Dangerous Castle.'

'Yet I would fain hear,' answered the knight, 'your own minstrel account of those legends which have induced you, for the amusement of future times, to visit a country which, at this period, is so distracted and perilous.'

'If you can endure the length of a minstrel tale,' said Bertram, 'I for one am always amused by the exercise of my vocation, and have no objection to tell my story, provided you do not prove an impatient listener.'

'Nay, for that matter,' said the young knight, 'a fair listener thou shalt have of me ; and if my reward be not great, my attention at least shall be remarkable.'

'And he,' said the minstrel, 'must be a poor gleeman who does not hold himself better paid with that than with gold or silver, were the pieces English rose-nobles. On this condition, then, I begin a long story, which may, in one or other of its details, find subject for better minstrels than myself, and be listened to by such warriors as you hundreds of years hence.'

CHAPTER IV

While many a merry lay and many a song
Cheer'd the rough road, we wish'd the rough road long ;
The rough road, then returning in a round,
Mark'd their impatient steps, for all was fairy ground.

DR. JOHNSON.

'**I**T was about the year of redemption one thousand two hundred and eighty-five years,' began the minstrel, 'when King Alexander the Third of Scotland lost his daughter Margaret, whose only child, of the same name, called the Maiden of Norway, as her father was king of that country, became the heiress of this kingdom of Scotland, as well as of her father's crown. An unhappy death was this for Alexander, who had no nearer heirs left of his own body than this grandchild. She indeed might claim his kingdom by birthright, but the difficulty of establishing such a claim of inheritance must have been anticipated by all who bestowed a thought upon the subject. The Scottish king, therefore, endeavoured to make up for his loss by replacing his late queen, who was an English princess, sister of our Edward the First, with Juletta, daughter of the Count de Dreux. The solemnities at the nuptial ceremony, which took place in the town of Jedburgh, were very great and remarkable, and particularly when, amidst the display of a pageant which was exhibited on the occasion, a ghastly spectre made its appearance in the form of a skeleton, as the King of Terrors is said to be represented. Your worship is free to laugh at this, if you think it a proper subject for mirth ; but men are alive who viewed it with their own eyes, and the event showed too well of what misfortunes this apparition was the singular prognostication.'

'I have heard the story,' said the knight ; 'but the monk who told it me suggested that the figure, though unhappily chosen, was perhaps purposely introduced as a part of the pageant.'

'I know not that,' said the minstrel, drily; 'but there is no doubt that shortly after this apparition King Alexander died, to the great sorrow of his people. The Maid of Norway, his heiress, speedily followed her grandfather to the grave, and our English king, sir knight, raked up a claim of dependency and homage due, he said, by Scotland, which neither the lawyers, nobles, priests, nor the very minstrels of Scotland had ever before heard of.'

'Now, beshrew me,' interrupted Sir Aymer de Valence, 'this is beyond bargain. I agreed to hear your tale with patience, but I did not pledge myself that it should contain matter to the reproach of Edward the First, of blessed memory; nor will I permit his name to be mentioned in my hearing without the respect due to his high rank and noble qualities.'

'Nay,' said the minstrel, 'I am no Highland bagpiper or genealogist, to carry respect for my art so far as to quarrel with a man of worship who stops me at the beginning of a pibroch. I am an Englishman, and wish dearly well to my country; and, above all, I must speak the truth. But I will avoid disputable topics. Your age, sir, though none of the ripest, authorises me to suppose you may have seen the battle of Falkirk, and other onslaughts in which the competition of Bruce and Baliol has been fiercely agitated, and you will permit me to say that, if the Scottish have not had the right upon their side, they have at least defended the wrong with the efforts of brave men and true.'

'Of brave men, I grant you,' said the knight, 'for I have seen no cowards amongst them; but as for truth, they can best judge of it who know how often they have sworn faith to England, and how repeatedly they have broken their vow.'

'I shall not stir the question,' said the minstrel, 'leaving it to your worship to determine which has most falsehood, he who compels a weaker person to take an unjust oath, or he who, compelled by necessity, takes the imposed oath without the intention of keeping his word.'

'Nay — nay,' said De Valence, 'let us keep our opinions, for we are not likely to force each other from the faith we have adopted on this subject. But take my advice, and, whilst thou travellest under an English pennon, take heed that thou keepest off this conversation in the hall and kitchen, where perhaps the soldier may be less tolerant than the officer. And now, in a word, what is thy legend of this Dangerous Castle?'

'For that,' replied Bertram, 'methinks your worship is

most likely to have a better edition than I, who have not been in this country for many years; but it is not for me to bandy opinions with your knightship. I will even proceed with the tale as I have heard it. I need not, I presume, inform your worship that the Lords of Douglas, who founded this castle, are second to no lineage in Scotland in the antiquity of their descent. Nay, they have themselves boasted that their family is not to be seen or distinguished, like other great houses, until it is found at once in a certain degree of eminence. "You may see us in the tree," they say, "you cannot discover us in the twig; you may see us in the stream, you cannot trace us to the fountain." In a word, they deny that historians or genealogists can point out the first mean man named Douglas who originally elevated the family; and true it is that, so far back as we have known this race, they have always been renowned for valour and enterprise, accompanied with the power which made that enterprise effectual.

'Enough,' said the knight, 'I have heard of the pride and power of that great family, nor does it interest me in the least to deny or detract from their bold claims to consideration in this respect.'

'Without doubt you must also have heard, noble sir,' replied the minstrel, 'many things of James, the present heir of the house of Douglas?'

'More than enough,' answered the English knight; 'he is known to have been a stout supporter of that outlawed traitor, William Wallace; and again, upon the first raising of the banner by this Robert Bruce, who pretends to be King of Scotland, this young springald, James Douglas, must needs start into rebellion anew. He plunders his uncle, the Archbishop of St. Andrews, of a considerable sum of money to fill the Scottish usurper's not over-burdened treasury, debauches the servants of his relation, takes arms, and, though repeatedly chastised in the field, still keeps his vaunt, and threatens mischief to those who, in the name of his rightful sovereign, defend the Castle of Douglas Dale.'

'It is your pleasure to say so, sir knight,' replied Bertram; 'yet I am sure, were you a Scot, you would with patience hear me tell over what has been said of this young man by those who have known him, and whose account of his adventures shows how differently the same tale may be told. These men talk of the present heir of this ancient family as fully adequate to maintain and augment its reputation; ready, indeed, to

undergo every peril in the cause of Robert the Bruce, because the Bruce is esteemed by him his lawful king ; and sworn and devoted, with such small strength as he can muster, to revenge himself on those Southrons who have, for several years, as he thinks, unjustly possessed themselves of his father's abode.'

'O,' replied Sir Aymer de Valence, 'we have heard much of his achievements in this respect, and of his threats against our governor and ourselves ; yet we think it scarce likely that Sir John de Walton will move from Douglas Dale without the King's order, although this James Douglas, a mere chicken, take upon himself to crack his voice by crowing like a cock of the game.'

'Sir,' answered Bertram, 'our acquaintance is but brief, and yet I feel it has been so beneficial to me, that I trust there is no harm in hoping that James Douglas and you may never meet in bodily presence till the state of the two countries shall admit of peace being between you.'

'Thou art obliging, friend,' answered Sir Aymer, 'and, I doubt not, sincere ; and truly thou seemest to have a wholesome sense of the respect due to this young knight when men talk of him in his native valley of Douglas. For me, I am only poor Aymer of Valence, without an acre of land, or much hope of acquiring any, unless I cut something huge with my broadsword out of the middle of these hills. Only this, good minstrel, if thou livest to tell my story, may I pray thee to use thy scrupulous custom of searching out the verity, and whether I live or die thou shalt not, I think, discover that thy late acquaintance of a spring morning hath added more to the laurels of James of Douglas than any man's death must give to him by whose stronger arm, or more lucky chance, it is his lot to fall.'

'I nothing fear you, sir knight,' said the minstrel, 'for yours is that happy brain which, bold in youth as beseems a young knight, is in more advanced life the happy source of prudent counsel, of which I would not, by an early death, wish thy country to be deprived.'

'Thou art so candid, then, as to wish Old England the benefit of good advice,' said Sir Aymer, 'though thou leanest to the side of Scotland in the controversy ?'

'Assuredly, sir knight,' said the minstrel, 'since, in wishing that Scotland and England each knew their own true interest, I am bound to wish them both alike well ; and they should, I think, desire to live in friendship together. Occupying each

their own portion of the same island, and living under the same laws, and being at peace with each other, they might, without fear, face the enmity of the whole world.'

'If thy faith be so liberal,' answered the knight, 'as becomes a good man, thou must certainly pray, sir minstrel, for the success of England in the war, by which alone these murderous hostilities of the Northern nation can end in a solid peace. The rebellions of this obstinate country are but the struggles of the stag when he is mortally wounded: the animal grows weaker and weaker with every struggle, till his resistance is effectually tamed by the hand of death.'

'Not so, sir knight,' said the minstrel; 'if my creed is well taught me, we ought not so to pray. We may, without offence, intimate in our prayers the end we wish to obtain; but it is not for us poor mortals to point out to an all-seeing Providence the precise manner in which our petitions are to be accomplished, or to wish the downfall of a country to end its commotions, as the death-stab terminates the agonies of the wounded stag. Whether I appeal to my heart or to my understanding, the dictate would be to petition Heaven for what is just and equal in the case; and if I should fear for thee, sir knight, in an encounter with James of Douglas, it is only because he upholds, as I conceive, the better side of the debate, and powers more than earthly have presaged to him success.'

'Do you tell me so, sir minstrel,' said De Valence in a threatening tone, 'knowing me and my office?'

'Your personal dignity and authority,' said Bertram, 'cannot change the right into wrong, or avert what Providence has decreed to take place. You know, I must presume, that the Douglas hath, by various devices, already contrived to make himself master of this Castle of Douglas three several times, and that Sir John de Walton, the present governor, holds it with a garrison trebled in force, and under the assurance that if, without surprise, he should keep it from the Scottish power for a year and a day, he shall obtain the barony of Douglas, with its extensive appendages, in free property for his reward; while, on the other hand, if he shall suffer the fortress during this space to be taken, either by guile or by open force, as has happened successively to the holders of the Dangerous Castle, he will become liable to dishonour as a knight and to attainder as a subject; and the chiefs who take share with him and serve under him will participate also in his guilt and his punishment.'

'All this I know well,' said Sir Aymer; 'and I only wonder that, having become public, the conditions have, nevertheless, been told with so much accuracy; but what has this to do with the issue of the combat, if the Douglas and I should chance to meet? I will not surely be disposed to fight with less animation because I wear my fortune upon my sword, or become coward because I fight for a portion of the Douglas's estate, as well as for fame and for fatherland? And after all ——'

'Hear me,' said the minstrel; 'an ancient gleeman has said that in a false quarrel there is no true valour, and the *los* or praise won therein is, when balanced against honest fame, as valueless as a wreath formed out of copper compared to a chaplet of pure gold; but I bid you not take me for thy warrant in this important question. Thou well knowest how James of Thirlwall, the last English commander before Sir John de Walton, was surprised, and the castle sacked with circumstances of great inhumanity.'

'Truly,' said Sir Aymer, 'I think that Scotland and England both have heard of that onslaught, and of the disgusting proceedings of the Scottish chieftain, when he caused transport into the wild forest gold, silver, ammunition, and armour, and all things that could be easily removed, and destroyed a large quantity of provisions, in a manner equally savage and unheard of.'

'Perhaps, sir knight,' said Bertram, 'you were yourself an eyewitness of that transaction, which has been spoken of far and wide, and is called the Douglas Larder?'

'I saw not the actual accomplishment of the deed,' said De Valence — 'that is, I witnessed it not a-doing — but I beheld enough of the sad relics to make the Douglas Larder never by me to be forgotten as a record of horror and abomination. I would speak it truly, by the hand of my father and by my honour as a knight! and I will leave it to thee to judge whether it was a deed calculated to secure the smiles of Heaven in favour of the actors. This is my edition of the story:—

'A large quantity of provisions had during two years or thereabouts been collected from different points, and the castle of Douglas, newly repaired, and, as was thought, carefully guarded, was appointed as the place where the said provisions were to be put in store for the service of the King of England, or of the Lord Clifford, whichever should first enter the western marches with an English army, and stand in need of such a

supply. This army was also to relieve our wants—I mean those of my uncle the Earl of Pembroke, who for some time before had lain with a considerable force in the town called Ayr, near the old Caledonian Forest, and where we had hot wars with the insurgent Scots. Well, sir, it happened, as in similar cases, that Thirlwall, though a bold and active soldier, was surprised in the Castle of Douglas, about Hallowmass, by this same worthy, young James Douglas. In no very good humour was he, as you may suppose; for his father, called William the Hardy, or William Long-legs, having refused, on any terms, to become Anglicised, was made a lawful prisoner, and died as such, closely confined in Berwick, or, as some say, in Newcastle. The news of his father's death had put young Douglas into no small rage, and tended, I think, to suggest what he did in his resentment. Embarrassed by the quantity of provisions which he found in the castle, which, the English being superior in the country, he had neither the means to remove nor the leisure to stay and consume, the fiend, as I think, inspired him with a contrivance to render them unfit for human use. You shall judge yourself whether it was likely to be suggested by a good or an evil spirit.

‘According to this device, the gold, silver, and other transportable commodities being carried to secret places of safety, Douglas caused the meat, the malt, and other corn or grain, to be brought down into the castle cellar, where he emptied the contents of the sacks into one loathsome heap, striking out the heads of the barrels and puncheons, so as to let the mingled drink run through the heap of meal, grain, and so forth. The bullocks provided for slaughter were in like manner knocked on the head, and their blood suffered to drain into the mass of edible substances; and lastly, the flesh of these oxen was buried in the same mass, in which were also included the dead bodies of those in the castle, who, receiving no quarter from the Douglas, paid dear enough for having kept no better watch. This base and unworthy abuse of provisions intended for the use of man, together with throwing into the well of the castle carcasses of men and horses, and other filth for polluting the same, has since that time been called the DOUGLAS LARDER.’

‘I pretend not, good Sir Aymer,’ said the minstrel, ‘to vindicate what you justly reprove, nor can I conceive any mode of rendering provisions arranged after the form of the Douglas Larder proper for the use of any Christian; yet this young gentleman might perhaps act under the sting of natural resent-

ment, rendering his singular exploit more excusable than it may seem at first. Think, if your own noble father had just died in a lingering captivity, his inheritance seized upon, and occupied as a garrison by a foreign enemy, would not these things stir you to a mode of resentment which, in cold blood, and judging of it as the action of an enemy, your honour might hold in natural and laudable abhorrence? Would you pay respect to dead and senseless objects, which no one could blame your appropriating to your own use, or even scruple the refusal of quarter to prisoners, which is so often practised even in wars which are otherwise termed fair and humane?

'You press me close, minstrel,' said Aymer de Valence. 'I at least have no great interest to excuse the Douglas in this matter, since its consequences were, that I myself, and the rest of my uncle's host, laboured with Clifford and his army to rebuild this same Dangerous Castle; and feeling no stomach for the cheer that the Douglas had left us, we suffered hard commons, though I acknowledge we did not hesitate to adopt for our own use such sheep and oxen as the miserable Scots had still left around their farm-houses; and I jest not, sir minstrel, when I acknowledge in sad earnest that we martial men ought to make our petitions with peculiar penitence to Heaven for mercy, when we reflect on the various miseries which the nature of our profession compels us to inflict on each other.'

'It seems to me,' answered the minstrel, 'that those who feel the stings of their own conscience should be more lenient when they speak of the offences of others; nor do I greatly rely on a sort of prophecy which was delivered, as the men of this hill district say, to the young Douglas, by a man who in the course of nature should have been long since dead, promising him a course of success against the English for having sacrificed his own castle to prevent their making it a garrison.'

'We have time enough for the story,' said Sir Aymer, 'and methinks it would suit a knight and a minstrel better than the grave converse we have hitherto held, which would have beseemed—so God save me!—the mouths of two travelling friars.'

'So be it,' said the minstrel: 'the rote or the viol easily changes its time and varies its note.'

CHAPTER V

A tale of sorrow, for your eyes may weep ;
A tale of horror, for your flesh may tingle ;
A tale of wonder, for the eyebrows arch,
And the flesh curdles, if you read it rightly.

Old Play.

‘YOUR honour must be informed, gentle Sir Aymer de Valence, that I have heard this story told at a great distance from the land in which it happened, by a sworn minstrel, the ancient friend and servant of the house of Douglas, one of the best, it is said, who ever belonged to that noble family. This minstrel, Hugo Hugonet by name, attended his young master when on this fierce exploit, as was his wont.

‘The castle was in total tumult ; in one corner the war-men were busy breaking up and destroying provisions ; in another, they were slaying men, horses, and cattle, and these actions were accompanied with appropriate sounds. The cattle, particularly, had become sensible of their impending fate, and with awkward resistance and piteous cries testified that reluctance with which these poor creatures look instinctively on the shambles. The groans and screams of men undergoing, or about to undergo, the stroke of death, and the screeches of the poor horses which were in mortal agony, formed a fearful chorus. Hugonet was desirous to remove himself from such unpleasant sights and sounds ; but his master, the Douglas, had been a man of some reading, and his old servant was anxious to secure a book of poetry, to which he had been attached of old. This contained the lays of an ancient Scottish bard, who, if an ordinary human creature while he was in this life, cannot now perhaps be exactly termed such.

‘He was, in short, that Thomas, distinguished by the name of the Rhymer, and whose intimacy, it is said, became so great with the gifted people called the faëry folk that he could, like them, foretell the future deed before it came to pass, and united

in his own person the quality of bard and of soothsayer. But of late years he had vanished almost entirely from this mortal scene; and although the time and manner of his death were never publicly known, yet the general belief was, that he was not severed from the land of the living, but removed to the land of faëry, from whence he sometimes made excursions, and concerned himself only about matters which were to come hereafter. Hugonet was the more earnest to prevent the loss of the works of this ancient bard, as many of his poems and predictions were said to be preserved in the castle, and were supposed to contain much especially connected with the old house of Douglas, as well as other families of ancient descent, who had been subjects of this old man's prophecy; and accordingly he determined to save this volume from destruction in the general conflagration to which the building was about to be consigned by the heir of its ancient proprietors. With this view he hurried up into the little old vaulted room called "the Douglas's study," in which there might be some dozen old books written by the ancient chaplains, in what the minstrels call the letter black. He immediately discovered the celebrated lay, called *Sir Tristrem*, which has been so often altered and abridged as to bear little resemblance to the original. Hugonet, who well knew the value in which this poem was held by the ancient lords of the castle, took the parchment volume from the shelves of the library, and laid it upon a small desk adjacent to the baron's chair. Having made such preparation for putting it in safety, he fell into a brief reverie, in which the decay of light, and the preparations for the Douglas Larder, but especially the last sight of objects which had been familiar to his eyes, now on the eve of destruction, engaged him at that moment.

'The bard, therefore, was thinking within himself upon the uncommon mixture of the mystical scholar and warrior in his old master, when, as he bent his eyes upon the book of the ancient Rhymmer, he was astonished to observe it slowly removed from the desk on which it lay by an invisible hand. The old man looked with horror at the spontaneous motion of the book for the safety of which he was interested, and had the courage to approach a little nearer the table, in order to discover by what means it had been withdrawn.

'I have said the room was already becoming dark, so as to render it difficult to distinguish any person in the chair, though it now appeared, on closer examination, that a kind of shadowy

outline of a human form was seated in it, but neither precise enough to convey its exact figure to the mind nor so detailed as to intimate distinctly its mode of action. The bard of Douglas, therefore, gazed upon the object of his fear, as if he had looked upon something not mortal; nevertheless, as he gazed more intently, he became more capable of discovering the object which offered itself to his eyes, and they grew by degrees more keen to penetrate what they witnessed. A tall thin form, attired in, or rather shaded with, a long flowing dusky robe, having a face and physiognomy so wild and overgrown with hair as to be hardly human, were the only marked outlines of the phantom; and, looking more attentively, Hugonet was still sensible of two other forms, the outlines, it seemed, of a hart and a hind, which appeared half to shelter themselves behind the person and under the robe of this supernatural figure.

‘A probable tale,’ said the knight, ‘for you, sir minstrel, a man of sense as you seem to be, to recite so gravely! From what wise authority have you had this tale, which, though it might pass well enough amid clanging beakers, must be held quite apocryphal in the sober hours of the morning?’

‘By my minstrel word, sir knight,’ answered Bertram, ‘I am no propagator of the fable, if it be one; Hugonet, the violer, when he had retired into a cloister near the Lake of Pembro-mere in Wales, communicated the story to me as I now tell it. Therefore, as it was upon the authority of an eyewitness, I apologise not for relating it to you, since I could hardly discover a more direct source of knowledge.’

‘Be it so, sir minstrel,’ said the knight; ‘tell on thy tale, and may thy legend escape criticism from others as well as from me.’

‘Hugonet, sir knight,’ answered Bertram, ‘was a holy man, and maintained a fair character during his whole life, notwithstanding his trade may be esteemed a light one. The vision spoke to him in an antique language, like that formerly used in the kingdom of Strathclyde, being a species of Scots or Gaelic, which few would have comprehended.

“You are a learned man,” said the apparition, “and not unacquainted with the dialects used in your country formerly, although they are now out of date, and you are obliged to translate them into the vulgar Saxon of Deira or Northumberland; but highly must an ancient British bard prize one in this ‘remote term of time’ who sets upon the poetry of his

native country a value which invites him to think of its preservation at a moment of such terror as influences the present evening."

"It is, indeed," said Hugonet, "a night of terror, that calls even the dead from the grave, and makes them the ghastly and fearful companions of the living. Who or what art thou, in God's name, who breakest the bounds which divide them, and revisitest thus strangely the state thou hast so long bid adieu to?"

"I am," replied the vision, "that celebrated Thomas the Rhymer, by some called Thomas of Ercildoun, or Thomas the True Speaker. Like other sages, I am permitted at times to revisit the scenes of my former life, nor am I incapable of removing the shadowy clouds and darkness which overhang futurity; and know, thou afflicted man, that what thou now seest in this woeful country is not a general emblem of what shall therein befall hereafter; but in proportion as the Douglasses are now suffering the loss and destruction of their home for their loyalty to the rightful heir of the Scottish kingdom, so hath Heaven appointed for them a just reward; and as they have not spared to burn and destroy their own house and that of their fathers in the Bruce's cause, so is it the doom of Heaven that, as often as the walls of Douglas Castle shall be burnt to the ground, they shall be again rebuilt still more stately and more magnificent than before."

'A cry was now heard like that of a multitude in the courtyard, joining in a fierce shout of exultation; at the same time a broad and ruddy glow seemed to burst from the beams and rafters, and sparks flew from them as from the smith's stithy, while the element caught to its fuel, and the conflagration broke its way through every aperture.

"See ye that?" said the vision, casting his eye towards the windows, and disappearing. "Begone! The fated hour of removing this book is not yet come, nor are thine the destined hands. But it will be safe where I have placed it, and the time of its removal shall come." The voice was heard after the form had vanished, and the brain of Hugonet almost turned round at the wild scene which he beheld; his utmost exertion was scarcely sufficient to withdraw him from the terrible spot; and Douglas Castle that night sunk into ashes and smoke, to arise, in no great length of time, in a form stronger than ever.' The minstrel stopt, and his hearer, the English knight, remained silent for some minutes ere at length he replied.

'It is true, minstrel,' answered Sir Aymer, 'that your tale is so far undeniable, that this castle, three times burned down by the heir of the house and of the barony, has hitherto been as often reared again by Henry Lord Clifford and other generals of the English, who endeavoured on every occasion to build it up more artificially and more strongly than it had formerly existed, since it occupies a position too important to the safety of our Scottish border to permit our yielding it up. This I myself have partly witnessed. But I cannot think that, because the castle has been so destroyed, it is therefore decreed so to be repaired in future, considering that such cruelties as surely cannot meet the approbation of Heaven have attended the feats of the Douglasses. But I see thou art determined to keep thine own faith, nor can I blame thee, since the wonderful turns of fate which have attended this fortress are sufficient to warrant any one to watch for what seem the peculiar indications of the will of Heaven; but thou mayst believe, good minstrel, that the fault shall not be mine if the young Douglas shall have opportunity to exercise his cookery upon a second edition of his family larder, or to profit by the predictions of Thomas the Rhymer.'

'I do not doubt due circumspection upon your own part and Sir John de Walton's,' said Bertram; 'but there is no crime in my saying that Heaven can accomplish its own purposes. I look upon Douglas Castle as in some degree a fated place, and I long to see what changes time may have made in it during the currency of twenty years. Above all, I desire to secure, if possible, the volume of this Thomas of Ercildoun, having in it such a fund of forgotten minstrelsy, and of prophecies respecting the future fates of the British kingdom, both northern and southern.'

The knight made no answer, but rode a little space forward, keeping the upper part of the ridge of the water, by which the road down the vale seemed to be rather sharply conducted. It at length attained the summit of an acclivity of considerable length. From this point, and behind a conspicuous rock, which appeared to have been pushed aside, as it were, like the scene of a theatre, to admit a view of the under part of the valley, the travellers beheld the extensive vale, parts of which have been already shown in detail, but which, as the river became narrower, was now entirely laid bare in its height and depth as far as it extended, and displayed in its precincts, at a little distance from the course of the stream, the towering and lordly

castle to which it gave the name. The mist, which continued to encumber the valley with its fleecy clouds, showed imperfectly the rude fortifications which served to defend the small town of Douglas, which was strong enough to repel a desultory attack, but not to withstand what was called in those days a formal siege. The most striking feature was its church, an ancient Gothic pile raised on an eminence in the centre of the town, and even then extremely ruinous. To the left, and lying in the distance, might be seen other towers and battlements; and, divided from the town by a piece of artificial water, which extended almost around it, arose the Dangerous Castle of Douglas.

Sternly was it fortified, after the fashion of the middle ages, with donjon and battlements; displaying, above others, the tall tower, which bore the name of Lord Henry's, or the Clifford's, Tower.

'Yonder is the castle,' said Aymer de Valence, extending his arm, with a smile of triumph upon his brow; 'thou mayst judge thyself whether the defences added to it under the Clifford are likely to render its next capture a more easy deed than the last.'

The minstrel barely shook his head, and quoted from the Psalmist — '*Nisi Dominus custodiet.*' Nor did he prosecute the discourse, though De Valence answered eagerly, 'My own edition of the text is not very different from thine; but, methinks, thou art more spiritually-minded than can always be predicated of a wandering minstrel.'

'God knows,' said Bertram, 'that if I, or such as I, are forgetful of the finger of Providence in accomplishing its purposes in this lower world, we have heavier blame than that of other people, since we are perpetually called upon, in the exercise of our fanciful profession, to admire the turns of fate which bring good out of evil, and which render those who think only of their own passions and purposes the executors of the will of Heaven.'

'I do submit to what you say, sir minstrel,' answered the knight, 'and it would be unlawful to express any doubt of the truths which you speak so solemnly, any more than of your own belief in them. Let me add, sir, that I think I have power enough in this garrison to bid you welcome, and Sir John de Walton, I hope, will not refuse access to hall, castle, or knight's bower to a person of your profession, and by whose conversation we shall perhaps profit somewhat. I cannot, how-

ever, lead you to expect such indulgence for your son, considering the present state of his health ; but if I procure him the privilege to remain at the convent of St. Bride, he will be there unmolested and in safety, until you have renewed your acquaintance with Douglas Dale and its history, and are disposed to set forward on your journey.'

'I embrace your honour's proposal the more willingly,' said the minstrel, 'that I can recompense the father abbot.'

'A main point with holy men or women,' replied De Valence, 'who, in time of warfare, subsist by affording the visitors of their shrine the means of maintenance in their cloisters for a passing season.'

The party now approached the sentinels on guard at the castle, who were closely and thickly stationed, and who respectfully admitted Sir Aymer de Valence, as next in command under Sir John de Walton. Fabian — for so was the young squire named who attended on De Valence — mentioned it as his master's pleasure that the minstrel should also be admitted.

An old archer, however, looked hard at the minstrel as he followed Sir Aymer. 'It is not for us,' said he, 'or any of our degree, to oppose the pleasure of Sir Aymer de Valence, nephew to the Earl of Pembroke, in such a matter ; and for us, Master Fabian, welcome are you to make the gleeman your companion both at bed and board, as well as your visitant, a week or two at the Castle of Douglas ; but your worship is well aware of the strict order of watch laid upon us, and if Solomon king of Israel were to come here as a travelling minstrel, by my faith I durst not give him entrance, unless I had positive authority from Sir John de Walton.'

'Do you doubt, sirrah,' said Sir Aymer de Valence, who returned on hearing an altercation betwixt Fabian and the archer — 'do you doubt that I have good authority to entertain a guest, or do you presume to contest it ?'

'Heaven forbid !' said the old man, 'that I should presume to place my own desire in opposition to your worship, who has so lately and so honourably acquired your spurs ; but in this matter I must think what will be the wish of Sir John de Walton, who is your governor, sir knight, as well as mine ; and so far I hold it worth while to detain your guest until Sir John return from a ride to the outposts of the castle ; and this, I conceive, being my duty, will be no matter of offence to your worship.'

'Methinks,' said the knight, 'it is saucy in thee to suppose

that my commands can have anything in them improper, or contradictory to those of Sir John de Walton; thou mayst trust to me at least that thou shalt come to no harm. Keep this man in the guard-room; let him not want good cheer, and when Sir John de Walton returns, report him as a person admitted by my invitation, and if anything more be wanted to make out your excuse, I shall not be reluctant in stating it to the governor.'

The archer made a signal of obedience with the pike which he held in his hand, and resumed the grave and solemn manner of a sentinel upon his post. He first, however, ushered in the minstrel, and furnished him with food and liquor, speaking at the same time to Fabian, who remained behind. The smart young stripling had become very proud of late, in consequence of obtaining the name of Sir Aymer's squire, and advancing a step in chivalry, as Sir Aymer himself had, somewhat earlier than the usual period, been advanced from squire to knight.

'I tell thee, Fabian,' said the old archer, whose gravity, sagacity, and skill in his vocation, while they gained him the confidence of all in the castle, subjected him, as he himself said, occasionally to the ridicule of the young coxcombs, and at the same time, we may add, rendered him somewhat pragmatic and punctilious towards those who stood higher than himself in birth and rank — 'I tell thee, Fabian, thou wilt do thy master, Sir Aymer, good service if thou wilt give him a hint to suffer an old archer, man-at-arms, or such-like, to give him a fair and civil answer respecting that which he commands; for undoubtedly it is not in the first score of a man's years that he learns the various proper forms of military service; and Sir John de Walton, a most excellent commander no doubt, is one earnestly bent on pursuing the strict line of his duty, and will be rigorously severe, as well, believe me, with thy master as with a lesser person. Nay, he also possesses that zeal for his duty which induces him to throw blame, if there be the slightest ground for it, upon Aymer de Valence himself, although his uncle, the Earl of Pembroke, was Sir John de Walton's steady patron, and laid the beginning of his good fortune; for all which, by training up his nephew in the true discipline of the French wars, Sir John has taken the best way of showing himself grateful to the old earl.'

'Be it as you will, old Gilbert Greenleaf,' answered Fabian, 'thou knowest I never quarrel with thy sermonising, and therefore give me credit for submitting to many a lecture from

Sir John de Walton and thyself; but thou drivest this a little too far, if thou canst not let a day pass without giving me a flogging. Credit me, Sir John de Walton will not thank thee if thou term him one too old to remember that he himself had once some green sap in his veins. Ay, thus it is, the old man will not forget that he has once been young, nor the young that he must some day be old; and so the one changes his manners into the lingering formality of advanced age, and the other remains like a midsummer torrent swollen with rain, every drop of water in it noise, froth, and overflow. There is a maxim for thee, Gilbert! Heardest thou ever better? Hang it up amidst thy axioms of wisdom, and see if it will not pass among them like fifteen to the dozen. It will serve to bring thee off, man, when the wine-pot—thine only fault, good Gilbert—hath brought thee on occasion into something of a scrape.'

'Best keep it for thyself, good sir squire,' said the old man; 'methinks it is more like to stand thyself one day in good stead. Who ever heard of a knight, or of the wood of which a knight is made, and that is a squire, being punished corporally like a poor old archer or horseboy? Your worst fault will be mended by some of these witty sayings, and your best service will scarce be rewarded more thankfully than by giving thee the name of Fabian the Fabler, or some such witty title.'

Having unloosed his repartee to this extent, old Greenleaf resumed a certain acidity of countenance, which may be said to characterise those whose preferment hath become frozen under the influence of the slowness of its progress, and who display a general spleen against such as have obtained the advancement for which all are struggling earlier, and, as they suppose, with less merit than their own. From time to time the eye of the old sentinel stole from the top of his pike, and with an air of triumph rested upon the young man Fabian, as if to see how deeply the wound had galled him, while at the same time he held himself on the alert to perform whatever mechanical duty his post might require. Both Fabian and his master were at the happy period of life when such discontent as that of the grave archer affected them lightly, and, at the very worst, was considered as the jest of an old man and a good soldier; the more especially as he was always willing to do the duty of his companions, and was much trusted by Sir John de Walton, who, though very much younger, had been bred up like Greenleaf in the wars of Edward the First, and was tenacious in upholding strict discipline, which, since the

death of that great monarch, had been considerably neglected by the young and warm-blooded valour of England.

Meantime it occurred to Sir Aymer de Valence that, though, in displaying the usual degree of hospitality shown to such a man as Bertram, he had merely done what was becoming his own rank, as one possessed of the highest honours of chivalry, the self-styled minstrel might not in reality be a man of that worth which he assumed. There was certainly something in his conversation, at least more grave, if not more austere, than was common to those of his calling; and when he recollected many points of Sir John de Walton's minuteness, a doubt arose in his mind that the governor might not approve of his having introduced into the castle a person of Bertram's character, who was capable of making observations from which the garrison might afterwards feel much danger and inconvenience. Secretly, therefore, he regretted that he had not fairly intimated to the wandering minstrel that his reception, or that of any stranger, within the Dangerous Castle was not at present permitted by the circumstances of the times. In this case, the express line of his duty would have been his vindication, and instead, perhaps, of discountenance and blame, he would have had praise and honour from his superior.

With these thoughts passing through his mind, some tacit apprehension arose of a rebuke on the part of his commanding-officer, for this officer, notwithstanding his strictness, Sir Aymer loved as well as feared. He went, therefore, towards the guard-room of the castle, under the pretence of seeing that the rites of hospitality had been duly observed towards his late travelling companion. The minstrel arose respectfully, and from the manner in which he paid his compliments seemed, if he had not expected this call of inquiry, at least to be in no degree surprised at it. Sir Aymer, on the other hand, assumed an air something more distant than he had yet used towards Bertram, and in reverting to his former invitation, he now so far qualified it as to say, that the minstrel knew that he was only second in command, and that effectual permission to enter the castle ought to be sanctioned by Sir John de Walton.

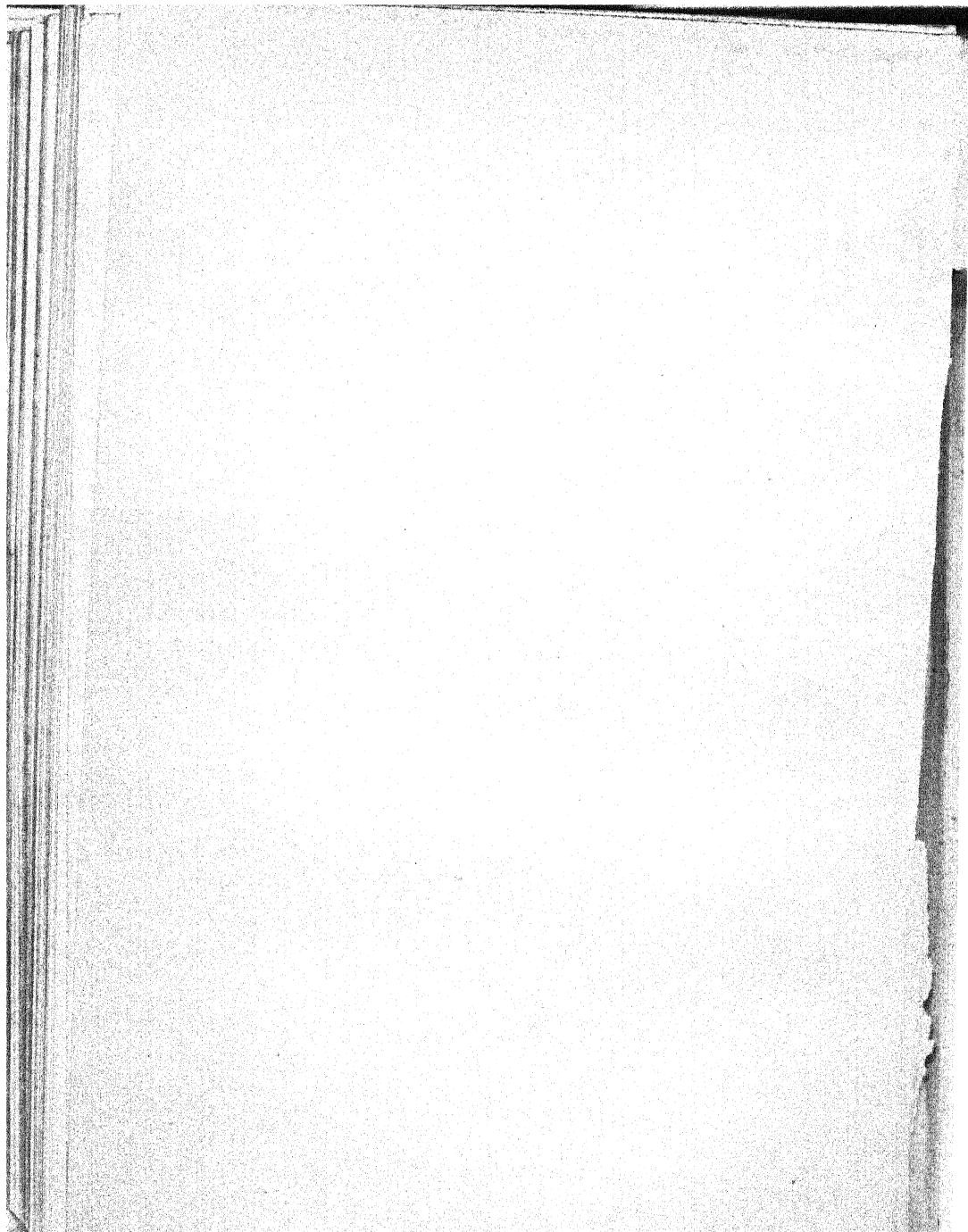
There is a civil way of seeming to believe any apology which people are disposed to receive in payment, without alleging suspicion of its currency. The minstrel, therefore, tendered his thanks for the civility which had so far been shown to him. 'It was a mere wish of passing curiosity,' he said, 'which, if

not granted, could be attended with no consequences either inconvenient or disagreeable to him. Thomas of Ercildoun was, according to the Welsh triads, one of the three bards of Britain who never stained a spear with blood, or was guilty either of taking or retaking castles and fortresses, and thus far not a person likely, after death, to be suspected of such warlike feats. But I can easily conceive why Sir John de Walton should have allowed the usual rites of hospitality to fall into disuse, and why a man of public character like myself ought not to desire food or lodging where it is accounted so dangerous ; and it can surprise no one why the governor did not even invest his worthy young lieutenant with the power of dispensing with so strict and unusual a rule.'

These words, very coolly spoken, had something of the effect of affronting the young knight, as insinuating that he was not held sufficiently trustworthy by Sir John de Walton, with whom he had lived on terms of affection and familiarity, though the governor had attained his thirtieth year and upwards, and his lieutenant did not yet write himself one-and-twenty, the full age of chivalry having been in his case particularly dispensed with, owing to a feat of early manhood. Ere he had fully composed the angry thoughts which were chafing in his mind, the sound of a hunting-bugle was heard at the gate, and from the sort of general stir which it spread through the garrison, it was plain that the governor had returned from his ride. Every sentinel, seemingly animated by his presence, shouldered his pike more uprightly, gave the word of the post more sharply, and seemed more fully awake and conscious of his duty. Sir John de Walton, having alighted from his horse, asked Greenleaf what had passed during his absence ; the old archer 'thought it his duty to say that a minstrel, who seemed like a Scotchman, or wandering Borderer, had been admitted into the castle, while his son, a lad sick of the pestilence so much talked of, had been left for a time at the abbey of St. Bride.' This he said on Fabian's information. The archer added, that 'the father was a man of tale and song, who could keep the whole garrison amused, without giving them leave to attend to their own business.'

'We want no such devices to pass the time,' answered the governor ; 'and we would have been better satisfied if our lieutenant had been pleased to find us other guests, and fitter for a direct and frank communication, than one who, by his profession, is a detractor of God and a deceiver of man.'





'Yet,' said the old soldier, who could hardly listen even to his commander without indulging the humour of contradiction, 'I have heard your honour intimate that the trade of a minstrel, when it is justly acted up to, is as worthy as even the degree of knighthood itself.'

'Such it may have been in former days,' answered the knight; 'but in modern minstrelsy the duty of rendering the art an incentive to virtue is forgotten, and it is well if the poetry which fired our fathers to noble deeds does not now push on their children to such as are base and unworthy. But I will speak upon this to my friend Aymer, than whom I do not know a more excellent or a more high-spirited young man.'

While discoursing with the archer in this manner, Sir John de Walton, of a tall and handsome figure, advanced and stood within the ample arch of the guard-room chimney, and was listened to in reverential silence by trusty Gilbert, who filled up with nods and signs, as an attentive auditor, the pauses in the conversation.

The conduct of another hearer of what passed was not equally respectful, but, from his position, he escaped observation. This third person was no other than the squire Fabian, who was concealed from observation by his position behind the hob, or projecting portion of the old-fashioned fireplace, and hid himself yet more carefully when he heard the conversation between the governor and the archer turn to the prejudice, as he thought, of his master. The squire's employment at this time was the servile task of cleaning Sir Aymer's arms, which was conveniently performed by heating, upon the projection already specified, the pieces of steel armour for the usual thin coating of varnish. He could not, therefore, if he should be discovered, be considered as guilty of anything insolent or disrespectful. He was better screened from view, as a thick smoke arose from a quantity of oak panelling, carved in many cases with the crest and achievements of the Douglas family, which, being the fuel nearest at hand, lay smouldering in the chimney, and gathering to a blaze.

The governor, unconscious of this addition to his audience, pursued his conversation with Gilbert Greenleaf. 'I need not tell you,' he said, 'that I am interested in the speedy termination of this siege or blockade with which Douglas continues to threaten us; my own honour and affections are engaged in keeping this Dangerous Castle safe in England's behalf, but I

am troubled at the admission of this stranger ; and young De Valence would have acted more strictly in the line of his duty if he had refused to this wanderer any communication with this garrison without my permission.'

'Pity it is,' replied old Greenleaf, shaking his head, 'that this good-natured and gallant young knight is somewhat drawn aside by the rash advices of his squire, the boy Fabian, who has bravery, but as little steadiness in him as a bottle of fermented small beer.'

'Now hang thee,' thought Fabian to himself, 'for an old relic of the wars, stuffed full of conceit and warlike terms, like the soldier who, to keep himself from the cold, has lapped himself so close in a tattered ensign for a shelter, that his very outside may show nothing but rags and blazonry.'

'I would not think twice of the matter, were the party less dear to me,' said Sir John de Walton. 'But I would fain be of use to this young man, even although I should purchase his improvement in military knowledge at the expense of giving him a little pain. Experience should, as it were, be burnt in upon the mind of a young man, and not merely impressed by marking the lines of his chart out for him with chalk ; I will remember the hint you, Greenleaf, have given, and take an opportunity of severing these two young men ; and though I most dearly love the one, and am far from wishing ill to the other, yet at present, as you well hint, the blind is leading the blind, and the young knight has for his assistant and counsellor too young a squire, and that must be amended.'

'Marry, out upon thee, old palmer-worm !' said the page within himself ; 'have I found thee in the very fact of maligning myself and my master, as it is thy nature to do towards all the hopeful young buds of chivalry ? If it were not to dirty the arms of an *élève* of chivalry, by measuring them with one of thy rank, I might honour thee with a knightly invitation to the field, while the scandal which thou hast spoken is still foul upon thy tongue ; as it is, thou shalt not carry one kind of language publicly in the castle, and another before the governor, upon the footing of having served with him under the banner of Long-shanks. I will carry to my master this tale of thine evil intentions ; and when we have concerted together, it shall appear whether the youthful spirits of the garrison or the grey beards are most likely to be the hope and protection of this same Castle of Douglas.'

It is enough to say that Fabian pursued his purpose, in carrying to his master, and in no very good humour, the report of what had passed between Sir John de Walton and the old soldier. He succeeded in representing the whole as a formal offence intended to Sir Aymer de Valence ; while all that the governor did to remove the suspicions entertained by the young knight could not in any respect bring him to take a kindly view of the feelings of his commander towards him. He retained the impression which he had formed from Fabian's recital of what he had heard, and did not think he was doing Sir John de Walton any injustice in supposing him desirous to engross the greatest share of the fame acquired in the defence of the castle, and thrusting back his companions, who might reasonably pretend to a fair portion of it.

The mother of mischief, says a Scottish proverb, is no bigger than a midge's wing.¹ In this matter of quarrel neither the young man nor the older knight had afforded each other any just cause of offence. De Walton was a strict observer of military discipline, in which he had been educated from his extreme youth, and by which he was almost as completely ruled as by his natural disposition ; and his present situation added force to his original education.

Common report had even exaggerated the military skill, the love of adventure, and the great variety of enterprise ascribed to James, the young Lord of Douglas. He had, in the eyes of this Southern garrison, the faculties of a fiend, rather than those of a mere mortal ; for if the English soldiers cursed the tedium of the perpetual watch and ward upon the Dangerous Castle, which admitted of no relaxation from the severity of extreme duty, they agreed that a tall form was sure to appear to them with a battle-axe in his hand, and, entering into conversation in the most insinuating manner, never failed, with an ingenuity and eloquence equal to that of a fallen spirit, to recommend to the discontented sentinel some mode in which, by giving his assistance to betray the English, he might set himself at liberty. The variety of these devices, and the frequency of their recurrence, kept Sir John de Walton's anxiety so perpetually upon the stretch, that he at no time thought himself exactly out of the Black Douglas's reach any more than the good Christian supposes himself out of reach of the wiles of the Devil ; while every new temptation, instead of confirming his hope, seems to announce that the immediate retreat of the

¹ *i. e.* Gnat's wing.

Evil One will be followed by some new attack yet more cunningly devised. Under this general state of anxiety and apprehension, the temper of the governor changed somewhat for the worse, and they who loved him best regretted most that he became addicted to complain of the want of diligence on the part of those who, neither invested with responsibility like his nor animated by the hope of such splendid rewards, did not entertain the same degree of watchful and incessant suspicion as himself. The soldiers muttered that the vigilance of their governor was marked with severity; the officers and men of rank, of whom there were several, as the castle was a renowned school of arms, and there was a certain merit attained even by serving within its walls, complained, at the same time, that Sir John de Walton no longer made parties for hunting, for hawking, or for any purpose which might soften the rigours of warfare, and suffered nothing to go forward but the precise discipline of the castle. On the other hand, it may be usually granted that the castle is well kept where the governor is a disciplinarian; and where feuds and personal quarrels are found in the garrison, the young men are usually more in fault than those whose greater experience has convinced them of the necessity of using the strictest precautions.

A generous mind — and such was Sir John de Walton's — is often in this way changed and corrupted by the habit of over-vigilance, and pushed beyond its natural limits of candour. Neither was Sir Aymer de Valence free from a similar change: suspicion, though from a different cause, seemed also to threaten to bias his open and noble disposition, in those qualities which had hitherto been proper to him. It was in vain that Sir John de Walton studiously sought opportunities to give his younger friend indulgences, which at times were as far extended as the duty of the garrison permitted. The blow was struck: the alarm had been given to a proud and fiery temper on both sides; and while De Valence entertained an opinion that he was unjustly suspected by a friend who was in several respects bound to him, De Walton, on the other hand, was led to conceive that a young man of whom he took a charge as affectionate as if he had been a son of his own, and who owed to his lessons what he knew of warfare, and what success he had obtained in life, had taken offence at trifles, and considered himself ill treated on very inadequate grounds. The seeds of disagreement thus sown between them failed not, like the

tares sown by the Enemy among the wheat, to pass from one class of the garrison to another; the soldiers, though without any better reason than merely to pass the time, took different sides between their governor and his young lieutenant; and so the ball of contention, being once thrown up between them, never lacked some arm or other to keep it in motion.

CHAPTER VI

Alas ! they had been friends in youth ;
But whispering tongues can poison truth ;
And constancy lives in realms above,
And life is thorny, and youth is vain,
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.

Each spoke words of high disdain,
And insult to his heart's dear brother,
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining ;
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder.
A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

COLERIDGE, *Christabel*.

IN prosecution of the intention which, when his blood was cool, seemed to him wisest, Sir John de Walton resolved that he would go to the verge of indulgence with his lieutenant and his young officers, furnish them with every species of amusement which the place rendered possible, and make them ashamed of their discontent by overloading them with courtesy. The first time, therefore, that he saw Aymer de Valence after his return to the castle, he addressed him in high spirits, whether real or assumed.

'What thinkest thou, my young friend,' said De Walton, 'if we try some of the woodland sports proper, they say, to this country? There are still in our neighbourhood some herds of the Caledonian breed of wild cattle,¹ which are nowhere to be found except among the moorlands, the black and rugged frontier of what was anciently called the kingdom of Strathclyde. There are some hunters, too, who have been accustomed to the sport, and who vouch that these animals are by far the

¹ See Note 6.

most bold and fierce subjects of chase in the island of Britain.'

'You will do as you please,' replied Sir Aymer, coldly; 'but it is not I, Sir John, who would recommend, for the sake of a hunting-match, that you should involve the whole garrison in danger; you know best the responsibilities incurred by your office here, and no doubt must have heedfully attended to them before making a proposal of such a nature.'

'I do indeed know my own duty,' replied De Walton, offended in turn, 'and might be allowed to think of yours also, without assuming more than my own share of responsibility; but it seems to me as if the commander of this Dangerous Castle, among other inabilities, were, as old people in this country say, subjected to a spell, and one which renders it impossible for him to guide his conduct so as to afford pleasure to those whom he is most desirous to oblige. Not a great many weeks since, whose eyes would have sparkled like those of Sir Aymer de Valence at the proposal of a general hunting-match after a new object of game; and now what is his bearing when such sport is proposed — merely, I think, to disappoint my purpose of obliging him? A cold acquiescence drops half-frozen from his lips, and he proposes to go to rouse the wild cattle with an air of gravity, as if he were undertaking a pilgrimage to the tomb of a martyr.'

'Not so, Sir John,' answered the young knight. 'In our present situation we stand conjoined in more charges than one, and although the greater and controlling trust is no doubt laid upon you as the elder and abler knight, yet still I feel that I myself have my own share of a serious responsibility. I trust, therefore, you will indulgently hear my opinion, and bear with it, even though it should appear to have relation to that part of our common charge which is more especially entrusted to your keeping. The dignity of knighthood which I have the honour to share with you, the accolade laid on my shoulder by the royal Plantagenet, entitles me, methinks, to so much grace.'

'I cry you mercy,' said the elder cavalier; 'I forgot how important a person I had before me, dubbed by King Edward himself, who was moved no doubt by special reasons to confer such an early honour; and I certainly feel that I overstep my duty when I propose anything that savours like idle sport to a person of such grave pretensions.'

'Sir John de Walton,' retorted De Valence, 'we have had

something too much of this — let it stop here. All that I mean to say is that, in this wardship of Douglas Castle, it will not be by my consent if any amusement which distinctly infers a relaxation of discipline be unnecessarily engaged in, and especially such as compels us to summon to our assistance a number of the Scots, whose evil disposition towards us we well know; nor will I, though my years have rendered me liable to such suspicion, suffer anything of this kind to be imputed to me; and if unfortunately — though I am sure I know not why — we are in future to lay aside those bonds of familiar friendship which formerly linked us to each other, yet I see no reason why we should not bear ourselves in our necessary communications like knights and gentlemen, and put the best construction on each other's motives, since there can be no reason for imputing the worst to anything that comes from either of us.'

'You may be right, Sir Aymer de Valence,' said the governor, bending stiffly; 'and since you say we are no longer bound to each other as friends, you may be certain, nevertheless, that I will never permit a hostile feeling of which you are the object to occupy my bosom. You have been long, and I hope not uselessly, my pupil in the duties of chivalry. You are the near relation of the Earl of Pembroke, my kind and constant patron, and if these circumstances are well weighed, they form a connexion which it would be difficult, at least for me, to break through. If you feel yourself, as you seem to intimate, less strictly tied by former obligations, you must take your own choice in fixing our relations towards each other.'

'I can only say,' replied De Valence, 'that my conduct will naturally be regulated by your own; and you, Sir John, cannot hope more devoutly than I do that our military duties may be fairly discharged without interfering with our friendly intercourse.'

The knights here parted, after a conference which once or twice had very nearly terminated in a full and cordial expression of opinion; but still there was wanting one kind heartfelt word to be either to break, as it were, the ice which was fast freezing between their intercourse, and neither chose to be the first in making the necessary advances with sufficient cordiality, though each would have gladly done so had the other appeared desirous of meeting it with the same ardour; but their pride was too high and prevented either from saying what might at once have put

them upon an open and manly footing. They parted, therefore, without again returning to the subject of the proposed diversion; until it was afterwards resumed in a formal note, praying Sir Aymer de Valence to accompany the commandant of Douglas Castle upon a solemn hunting-match, which had for its object the wild cattle of the neighbouring dale.

The time of meeting was appointed at six in the morning, beyond the gate of the outer barricade; and the chase was declared to be ended in the afternoon, when the recheat should be blown beneath the great oak, known by the name of Sholto's Club, which stood a remarkable object where Douglas Dale was bounded by several scattered trees, the outskirts of the forest and hill country. The usual warning was sent out to the common people, or vassals of the district, which they, notwithstanding their feeling of antipathy, received in general with delight, upon the great epicurean principle of *carpe diem* — that is to say, in whatever circumstances it happens to present itself, be sure you lose no recreation which life affords. A hunting-match has still its attractions, even though an English knight take his pleasure in the woods of the Douglas.

It was no doubt afflicting to these faithful vassals to acknowledge another lord than the redoubted Douglas, and to wait by wood and river at the command of English officers, and in the company of their archers, whom they accounted their natural enemies. Still it was the only species of amusement which had been permitted them for a long time, and they were not disposed to omit the rare opportunity of joining in it. The chase of the wolf, the wild boar, or even the timid stag, required silvan arms; the wild cattle still more demanded this equipment of war-bows and shafts, boar-spears and sharp swords, and other tools of the chase similar to those used in actual war. Considering this, the Scottish inhabitants were seldom allowed to join in the chase, except under regulations as to number and arms, and especially in preserving a balance of force on the side of the English soldiers, which was very offensive to them. The greater part of the garrison was upon such occasions kept on foot, and several detachments, formed according to the governor's direction, were stationed in different positions, in case any quarrel should suddenly break out.

pages, to whom such menial services were not accounted disgraceful, but, on the contrary, a proper step of their education. The number of those distinguished persons seated upon the present occasion at the table of dais, as it was called, in virtue of a canopy of green boughs with which it was overshadowed, comprehended Sir John de Walton, Sir Aymer de Valence, and some reverend brethren dedicated to the service of St. Bride, who, though Scottish ecclesiastics, were treated with becoming respect by the English soldiers. One or two Scottish retainers or vavasours, maintaining, perhaps in prudence, a suitable deference to the English knights, sat at the bottom of the table, and as many English archers, peculiarly respected by their superiors, were invited, according to the modern phrase, to the honours of the sitting.

Sir John de Walton sat at the head of the table ; his eye, though it seemed to have no certain object, yet never for a moment remained stationary, but glanced from one countenance to another of the ring formed by his guests, for such they all were, no doubt, though he himself could hardly have told upon what principle he had issued the invitations ; and even apparently was at a loss to think what, in one or two cases, had procured him the honour of their presence.

One person in particular caught De Walton's eye, as having the air of a redoubted man-at-arms, although it seemed as if fortune had not of late smiled upon his enterprises. He was a tall raw-boned man, of an extremely rugged countenance, and his skin, which showed itself through many a loophole in his dress, exhibited a complexion which must have endured all the varieties of an outlawed life ; and akin to one who had, according to the customary phrase, 'ta'en the bent with Robin Bruce' — in other words, occupied the moors with him as an insurgent. Some such idea certainly crossed De Walton's mind. Yet the apparent coolness and absence of alarm with which the stranger sat at the board of an English officer, at the same time being wholly in his power, had much in it which was irreconcilable with any such suggestion. De Walton, and several of those about him, had in the course of the day observed that this tattered cavalier, the most remarkable parts of whose garb and equipments consisted of an old coat-of-mail and a rusted yet massive partizan about eight feet long, was possessed of superior skill in the art of hunting to any individual of their numerous party. The governor having looked at this suspicious figure until he had rendered the stranger aware of the special

interest which he attracted, at length filled a goblet of choice wine, and requested him, as one of the best pupils of Sir Tristrem who had attended upon the day's chase, to pledge him in a vintage superior to that supplied to the general company.

'I suppose, however, sir,' said De Walton, 'you will have no objections to put off my challenge of a brimmer until you can answer my pledge in Gascoigne wine, which grew in the King's own demesne, was pressed for his own lip, and is therefore fittest to be emptied to his Majesty's health and prosperity.'

'One half of the island of Britain,' said the woodsman, with great composure, 'will be of your honour's opinion; but, as I belong to the other half, even the choicest liquor in Gascony cannot render that health acceptable to me.'

A murmur of disapprobation ran through the warriors present; the priests hung their heads, looked deadly grave, and muttered their paternosters.

'You see, stranger,' said De Walton, sternly, 'that your speech discomposes the company.'

'It may be so,' replied the man, in the same blunt tone; 'and it may happen that there is no harm in the speech notwithstanding.'

'Do you consider that it is made in my presence?' answered De Walton.

'Yes, sir governor.'

'And have you thought what must be the necessary inference?' continued De Walton.

'I may form a round guess,' answered the stranger, 'what I might have to fear, if your safe-conduct and word of honour, when inviting me to this hunting, were less trustworthy than I know full well it really is. But I am your guest; your meat is even now passing my throat; your cup, filled with right good wine, I have just now quaffed off; and I would not fear the rankest paynim infidel, if we stood in such relation together, much less an English knight. I tell you besides, sir knight, you undervalue the wine we have quaffed. The high flavour and contents of your cup, grow where it will, give me spirit to tell you one or two circumstances, which cold cautious sobriety would, in a moment like this, have left unsaid. You wish, I doubt not, to know who I am? My Christian name is Michael; my surname is that of Turnbull—a redoubted clan, to whose honours, even in the field of hunting or of battle, I have added something. My abode is beneath the mountain of

pages, to whom such menial services were not accounted disgraceful, but, on the contrary, a proper step of their education. The number of those distinguished persons seated upon the present occasion at the table of dais, as it was called, in virtue of a canopy of green boughs with which it was overshadowed, comprehended Sir John de Walton, Sir Aymer de Valence, and some reverend brethren dedicated to the service of St. Bride, who, though Scottish ecclesiastics, were treated with becoming respect by the English soldiers. One or two Scottish retainers or vavasours, maintaining, perhaps in prudence, a suitable deference to the English knights, sat at the bottom of the table, and as many English archers, peculiarly respected by their superiors, were invited, according to the modern phrase, to the honours of the sitting.

Sir John de Walton sat at the head of the table ; his eye, though it seemed to have no certain object, yet never for a moment remained stationary, but glanced from one countenance to another of the ring formed by his guests, for such they all were, no doubt, though he himself could hardly have told upon what principle he had issued the invitations ; and even apparently was at a loss to think what, in one or two cases, had procured him the honour of their presence.

One person in particular caught De Walton's eye, as having the air of a redoubted man-at-arms, although it seemed as if fortune had not of late smiled upon his enterprises. He was a tall raw-boned man, of an extremely rugged countenance, and his skin, which showed itself through many a loophole in his dress, exhibited a complexion which must have endured all the varieties of an outlawed life ; and akin to one who had, according to the customary phrase, 'ta'en the bent with Robin Bruce' — in other words, occupied the moors with him as an insurgent. Some such idea certainly crossed De Walton's mind. Yet the apparent coolness and absence of alarm with which the stranger sat at the board of an English officer, at the same time being wholly in his power, had much in it which was irreconcilable with any such suggestion. De Walton, and several of those about him, had in the course of the day observed that this tattered cavalier, the most remarkable parts of whose garb and equipments consisted of an old coat-of-mail and a rusted yet massive partizan about eight feet long, was possessed of superior skill in the art of hunting to any individual of their numerous party. The governor having looked at this suspicious figure until he had rendered the stranger aware of the special

interest which he attracted, at length filled a goblet of choice wine, and requested him, as one of the best pupils of Sir Tristrem who had attended upon the day's chase, to pledge him in a vintage superior to that supplied to the general company.

'I suppose, however, sir,' said De Walton, 'you will have no objections to put off my challenge of a brimmer until you can answer my pledge in Gascoigne wine, which grew in the King's own demesne, was pressed for his own lip, and is therefore fittest to be emptied to his Majesty's health and prosperity.'

'One half of the island of Britain,' said the woodsman, with great composure, 'will be of your honour's opinion; but, as I belong to the other half, even the choicest liquor in Gascony cannot render that health acceptable to me.'

A murmur of disapprobation ran through the warriors present; the priests hung their heads, looked deadly grave, and muttered their paternosters.

'You see, stranger,' said De Walton, sternly, 'that your speech discomposes the company.'

'It may be so,' replied the man, in the same blunt tone; 'and it may happen that there is no harm in the speech notwithstanding.'

'Do you consider that it is made in my presence?' answered De Walton.

'Yes, sir governor.'

'And have you thought what must be the necessary inference?' continued De Walton.

'I may form a round guess,' answered the stranger, 'what I might have to fear, if your safe-conduct and word of honour, when inviting me to this hunting, were less trustworthy than I know full well it really is. But I am your guest; your meat is even now passing my throat; your cup, filled with right good wine, I have just now quaffed off; and I would not fear the rankest paynim infidel, if we stood in such relation together, much less an English knight. I tell you besides, sir knight, you undervalue the wine we have quaffed. The high flavour and contents of your cup, grow where it will, give me spirit to tell you one or two circumstances, which cold cautious sobriety would, in a moment like this, have left unsaid. You wish, I doubt not, to know who I am? My Christian name is Michael; my surname is that of Turnbull—a redoubted clan, to whose honours, even in the field of hunting or of battle, I have added something. My abode is beneath the mountain of

Ruberslaw, by the fair streams of Teviot. You are surprised that I know how to hunt the wild cattle—I, who have made them my sport from infancy in the lonely forests of Jed and Southdean, and have killed more of them than you or any Englishman in your host ever saw, even if you include the doughty deeds of this day.'

The bold Borderer made this declaration with the same provoking degree of coolness which predominated in his whole demeanour, and was indeed his principal attribute. His effrontery did not fail to produce its effect upon Sir John de Walton, who instantly called out—'To arms—to arms! Secure the spy and traitor. Ho! pages and yeomen—William, Anthony, Bend-the-Bow, and Greenleaf—seize the traitor, and bind him with your bowstrings and dog-leashes—bind him, I say, until the blood start from beneath his nails.'

'Here is a goodly summons!' said Turnbull, with a sort of horse-laugh. 'Were I as sure of being answered by twenty men I could name, there would be small doubt of the upshot of this day.'

The archers thickened around the hunter, yet laid no hold on him, none of them being willing to be the first who broke the peace proper to the occasion.

'Tell me,' said De Walton, 'thou traitor, for what waitest thou here?'

'Simply and solely,' said the Jed forester, 'that I may deliver up to the Douglas the castle of his ancestors, and that I may ensure thee, sir Englishman, the payment of thy deserts, by cutting that very throat which thou makest such a bawling use of.'

At the same time, perceiving that the yeomen were crowding behind him to carry their lord's commands into execution so soon as they should be reiterated, the huntsman turned himself short round upon those who appeared about to surprise him, and having, by the suddenness of the action, induced them to step back a pace, he proceeded—'Yes, John de Walton, my purpose was ere now to have put thee to death, as one whom I find in possession of that castle and territory which belong to my master, a knight much more worthy than thyself; but I know not why I have paused—thou hast given me food when I have hungered for twenty-four hours, I have not therefore had the heart to pay thee at advantage as thou hast deserved. Begone from this place and country, and take the fair warning of a foe: thou hast constituted thyself the mortal enemy of this

people, and there are those among them who have seldom been injured or defied with impunity. Take no care in searching after me — it will be in vain — until I meet thee at a time which will come at my pleasure, not thine. Push not your inquisition into cruelty, to discover by what means I have deceived you, for it is impossible for you to learn; and with this friendly advice, look at me and take your leave, for, although we shall one day meet, it may be long ere I see you again.'

De Walton remained silent, hoping that his prisoner (for he saw no chance of his escaping) might, in his communicative humour, drop some more information, and was not desirous to precipitate a fray with which the scene was likely to conclude, unconscious at the same time of the advantage which he thereby gave the daring hunter.

As Turnbull concluded his sentence, he made a sudden spring backwards, which carried him out of the circle formed around him, and, before they were aware of his intentions, at once disappeared among the underwood.

'Seize him — seize him!' repeated De Walton; 'let us have him at least at our discretion, unless the earth has actually swallowed him.'

This indeed appeared not unlikely, for near the place where Turnbull had made the spring there yawned a steep ravine, into which he plunged, and descended by the assistance of branches, bushes, and copsewood until he reached the bottom, where he found some road to the outskirts of the forest, through which he made his escape, leaving the most expert woodsmen among the pursuers totally at fault, and unable to trace his footsteps.

CHAPTER VIII

THIS interlude carried some confusion into the proceedings of the hunt, thus suddenly surprised by the apparition of Michael Turnbull, an armed and avowed follower of the house of Douglas, a sight so little to be expected in the territory where his master was held a rebel and a bandit, and where he himself must have been well known to most of the peasantry present. The circumstance made an obvious impression on the English chivalry. Sir John de Walton looked grave and thoughtful, ordered the hunters to be assembled on the spot, and directed his soldiers to commence a strict search among the persons who had attended the chase, so as to discover whether Turnbull had any companions among them ; but it was too late to make that inquiry in the strict fashion which De Walton directed.

The Scottish attendants on the chase, when they beheld that the hunting, under pretence of which they were called together, was interrupted for the purpose of laying hands upon their persons, and subjecting them to examination, took care to suit their answers to the questions put to them — in a word, they kept their own secret, if they had any. Many of them, conscious of being the weaker party, became afraid of foul play, slipped away from the places to which they had been appointed, and left the hunting-match like men who conceived they had been invited with no friendly intent. Sir John de Walton became aware of the decreasing numbers of the Scottish, their gradual disappearance awakening in the English knight that degree of suspicion which had of late become his peculiar characteristic.

‘Take, I pray thee,’ said he to Sir Aymer de Valence, ‘as many men-at-arms as thou canst get together in five minutes’ space, and at least a hundred of the mounted archers, and ride as fast as thou canst, without permitting them to straggle from thy standard, to reinforce the garrison of Douglas ; for I have

my own thoughts what may have been attempted on the castle, when we observe with our own eyes such a nest of traitors here assembled.'

'With reverence, Sir John,' replied Aymer, 'you shoot in this matter rather beyond the mark. That the Scottish peasants have had bad thoughts against us, I will be the last to deny; but, long debarred from any silvan sport, you cannot wonder at their crowding to any diversion by wood or river, and still less at their being easily alarmed as to the certainty of the safe footing on which they stand with us. The least rough usage is likely to strike them with fear and with the desire of escape, and so ——'

'And so,' said Sir John de Walton, who had listened with a degree of impatience scarce consistent with the grave and formal politeness which one knight was accustomed to bestow upon another — 'and so I would rather see Sir Aymer de Valence busy his horse's heels to execute my orders than give his tongue the trouble of impugning them.'

At this sharp reprimand, all present looked at each other with indications of marked displeasure. Sir Aymer was highly offended, but saw it was no time to indulge in reprisal. He bowed until the feather which was in his barret-cap mingled with his horse's mane, and without reply — for he did not even choose to trust his voice in reply at the moment — headed a considerable body of cavalry by the straightest road back to the Castle of Douglas.

When he came to one of those eminences from which he could observe the massive and complicated towers and walls of the old fortress, with the glitter of the broad lake which surrounded it on three sides, he felt much pleasure at the sight of the great banner of England, which streamed from the highest part of the building. 'I knew it,' he internally said — 'I was certain that Sir John de Walton had become a very woman in the indulgence of his fears and suspicions. Alas! that a situation of responsibility should so much have altered a disposition which I have known so noble and so knightly! By this good day, I scarce know in what manner I should demean me when thus publicly rebuked before the garrison. Certainly he deserves that I should, at some time or other, let him understand that, however he may triumph in the exercise of his short-lived command, yet, when man is to meet with man, it will puzzle Sir John de Walton to show himself the superior of Aymer de Valence, or perhaps to establish himself as his equal.

But if, on the contrary, his fears, however fantastic, are sincere at the moment he expresses them, it becomes me to obey punctually commands which, however absurd, are imposed in consequence of the governor's belief that they are rendered necessary by the times, and not inventions designed to vex and domineer over his officers in the indulgence of his official powers. I would I knew which is the true statement of the case, and whether the once famed De Walton is become afraid of his enemies more than fits a knight, or makes imaginary doubts the pretext of tyrannising over his friend. I cannot say it would make much difference to me, but I would rather have it that the man I once loved had turned a petty tyrant than a weak-spirited coward; and I would be content that he should study to vex me, rather than be afraid of his own shadow.'

With these ideas passing in his mind, the young knight crossed the causeway which traversed the piece of water that fed the moat, and, passing under the strongly fortified gateway, gave strict orders for letting down the portcullis and elevating the drawbridge, even at the appearance of De Walton's own standard before it.

A slow and guarded movement from the hunting-ground to the Castle of Douglas gave the governor ample time to recover his temper, and to forget that his young friend had shown less alacrity than usual in obeying his commands. He was even disposed to treat as a jest the length of time and extreme degree of ceremony with which every point of martial discipline was observed on his own re-admission to the castle, though the raw air of a wet spring evening whistled around his own unsheltered person and those of his followers, as they waited before the castle gate for the exchange of passwords, the delivery of keys, and all the slow minutiae attendant upon the movements of a garrison in a well-guarded fortress.

'Come,' said he, to an old knight, who was peevishly blaming the lieutenant-governor, 'it was my own fault: I spoke but now to Aymer de Valence with more authoritative emphasis than his newly-dubbed dignity was pleased with, and this precise style of obedience is a piece of not unnatural and very pardonable revenge. Well, we will owe him a return, Sir Philip—shall we not? This is not a night to keep a man at the gate.'

This dialogue, overheard by some of the squires and pages, was bandied about from one to another, until it entirely lost the tone of good-humour in which it was spoken, and the

offence was one for which Sir John de Walton and old Sir Philip were to meditate revenge, and was said to have been represented by the governor as a piece of mortal and intentional offence on the part of his subordinate officer.

Thus an increasing feud went on from day to day between two warriors who, with no just cause of quarrel, had at heart every reason to esteem and love each other. It became visible in the fortress even to those of the lower rank, who hoped to gain some consequence by intermingling in the species of emulation produced by the jealousy of the commanding-officers — an emulation which may take place, indeed, in the present day, but can hardly have the same sense of wounded pride and jealous dignity attached to it which existed in times when the personal honour of knighthood rendered those who possessed it jealous of every punctilio.

So many little debates took place between the two knights, that Sir Aymer de Valence thought himself under the necessity of writing to his uncle and namesake, the Earl of Pembroke, stating that his officer, Sir John de Walton, had unfortunately of late taken some degree of prejudice against him, and that, after having borne with many provoking instances of his displeasure, he was now compelled to request that his place of service should be changed from the Castle of Douglas to wherever honour could be acquired, and time might be given to put an end to his present cause of complaint against his commanding-officer. Through the whole letter young Sir Aymer was particularly cautious how he expressed his sense of Sir John de Walton's jealousy or severe usage; but such sentiments are not easily concealed, and in spite of him an air of displeasure glanced out from several passages, and indicated his discontent with his uncle's old friend and companion-in-arms, and with the sphere of military duty which his uncle had himself assigned him.

An accidental movement among the English troops brought Sir Aymer an answer to his letter sooner than he could have hoped for at that time of day, in the ordinary course of correspondence, which was then extremely slow and interrupted.

Pembroke, a rigid old warrior, entertained the most partial opinion of Sir John de Walton, who was a work as it were of his own hands, and was indignant to find that his nephew, whom he considered as a mere boy, elated by having had the dignity of knighthood conferred upon him at an age unusually early, did not absolutely coincide with him in this opinion. He

replied to him, accordingly, in a tone of high displeasure, and expressed himself as a person of rank would write to a young and dependent kinsman upon the duties of his profession; and, as he gathered his nephew's cause of complaint from his own letter, he conceived that he did him no injustice in making it slighter than it really was. He reminded the young man that the study of chivalry consisted in the faithful and patient discharge of military service, whether of high or low degree, according to the circumstances in which war placed the champion. That, above all, the post of danger, which Douglas Castle had been termed by common consent, was also the post of honour; and that a young man should be cautious how he incurred the supposition of being desirous of quitting his present honourable command, because he was tired of the discipline of a military director so renowned as Sir John de Walton. Much also there was, as was natural in a letter of that time, concerning the duty of young men, whether in council or in arms, to be guided implicitly by their elders; and it was observed, with justice, that the commanding-officer, who had put himself into the situation of being responsible with his honour, if not his life, for the event of the siege or blockade, might justly, and in a degree more than common, claim the implicit direction of the whole defence. Lastly, Pembroke reminded his nephew that he was, in a great measure, dependent upon the report of Sir John de Walton for the character which he was to sustain in after life; and reminded him that a few actions of headlong and inconsiderate valour would not so firmly found his military reputation as months and years spent in regular, humble, and steady obedience to the commands which the governor of Douglas Castle might think necessary in so dangerous a conjuncture.

This missive arrived within so short a time after the despatch of the letter to which it was a reply, that Sir Aymer was almost tempted to suppose that his uncle had some mode of corresponding with De Walton unknown to the young knight himself and to the rest of the garrison. And as the earl alluded to some particular displeasure which had been exhibited by De Valence on a late trivial occasion, his uncle's knowledge of this and other minutiae seemed to confirm his idea that his own conduct was watched in a manner which he did not feel honourable to himself or dignified on the part of his relative; in a word, he conceived himself exposed to that sort of surveillance of which, in all ages, the young have accused the old.

It hardly needs to say that the admonition of the Earl of Pembroke greatly chafed the fiery spirit of his nephew, inso-much that, if the earl had wished to write a letter purposely to increase the prejudices which he desired to put an end to, he could not have made use of terms better calculated for that effect.

The truth was, that the old archer, Gilbert Greenleaf, had, without the knowledge of the young knight, gone to Pembroke's camp, in Ayrshire, and was recommended by Sir John de Walton to the earl as a person who could give such minute information respecting Aymer de Valence as he might desire to receive. The old archer was, as we have seen, a formalist, and when pressed on some points of Sir Aymer de Valence's discipline, he did not hesitate to throw out hints which, connected with those in the knight's letter to his uncle, made the severe old earl adopt too implicitly the idea that his nephew was indulging a spirit of insubordination, and a sense of impatience under authority, most dangerous to the character of a young soldier. A little explanation might have produced a complete agreement in the sentiments of both ; but for this fate allowed neither time nor opportunity ; and the old earl was unfortunately induced to become a party, instead of a negotiator, in the quarrel,

And by decision more embroil'd the fray.

Sir John de Walton soon perceived that the receipt of Pembroke's letter did not in any respect alter the cold, ceremonious conduct of his lieutenant towards him, which limited their intercourse to what their situation rendered indispensable, and exhibited no advances to any more frank or intimate connexion. Thus, as may sometimes be the case between officers in their relative situations even at the present day, they remained in that cold, stiff degree of official communication in which their intercourse was limited to as few expressions as the respective duties of their situation absolutely demanded. Such a state of misunderstanding is, in fact, worse than a downright quarrel : the latter may be explained or apologised for, or become the subject of mediation, but in such a case as the former an *éclaircissement* is as unlikely to take place as a general engagement between two armies which have taken up strong defensive positions on both sides. Duty, however, obliged the two principal persons in the garrison of Douglas Castle to be often together, when they were so far from seeking

duty, to put them to a close examination, with the question ordinary and extraordinary, as is usual in such cases, and to expel them not only from the castle, but from the whole territory of Douglas Dale, under pain of scourging, if they be again found wandering in these parts ?'

'You ask me my opinion,' said De Valence, 'and you shall have it, sir knight of Walton, as freely and fairly as if matters stood betwixt us on a footing as friendly as they ever did. I agree with you that most of those who in these days profess the science of minstrelsy are altogether unqualified to support the higher pretensions of that noble order. Minstrels by right are men who have dedicated themselves to the noble occupation of celebrating knightly deeds and generous principles : it is in their verse that the valiant knight is handed down to fame, and the poet has a right, nay, is bound, to emulate the virtues which he praises. The looseness of the times has diminished the consequence and impaired the morality of this class of wanderers : their satire and their praise are now too often distributed on no other principle than love of gain ; yet let us hope that there are still among them some who know, and also willingly perform, their duty. My own opinion is, that this Bertram holds himself as one who has not shared in the degradation of his brethren, nor bent the knee to the mammon of the times ; it must remain with you, sir, to judge whether such a person, honourably and morally disposed, can cause any danger to the Castle of Douglas. But believing, from the sentiments he has manifested to me, that he is incapable of playing the part of a traitor, I must strongly remonstrate against his being punished as one, or subjected to the torture within the walls of an English garrison. I should blush for my country if it required of us to inflict such wanton misery upon wanderers whose sole fault is poverty ; and your own knightly sentiments will suggest more than would become me to state to Sir John de Walton, unless in so far as is necessary to apologise for retaining my own opinion.'

Sir John de Walton's dark brow was stricken with red when he heard an opinion delivered in opposition to his own, which plainly went to stigmatise his advice as ungenerous, unfeeling, and unknightly. He made an effort to preserve his temper, while he thus replied with a degree of calmness — 'You have given your opinion, Sir Aymer de Valence ; and that you have given it openly and boldly, without regard to my own, I thank you. It is not quite so clear that I am obliged to defer my

own sentiments to yours, in case the rules on which I hold my office, the commands of the King, and the observations which I may personally have made, shall recommend to me a different line of conduct from that which you think it right to suggest.'

De Walton bowed, in conclusion, with great gravity; and the young knight, returning the reverence with exactly the same degree of stiff formality, asked whether there were any particular orders respecting his duty in the castle; and having received an answer in the negative, took his departure.

Sir John de Walton, after an expression of impatience, as if disappointed at finding that the advance which he had made towards an explanation with his young friend had proved unexpectedly abortive, composed his brow as if to deep thought, and walked several times to and fro in the apartment, considering what course he was to take in these circumstances. 'It is hard to censure him severely,' he said, 'when I recollect that, on first entering upon life, my own thoughts and feelings would have been the same with those of this giddy and hot-headed, but generous, boy. Now prudence teaches me to suspect mankind in a thousand instances where perhaps there is not sufficient ground. If I am disposed to venture my own honour and fortune, rather than an idle travelling minstrel should suffer a little pain, which at all events I might make up to him by money, still, have I a right to run the risk of a conspiracy against the King, and thus advance the treasonable surrender of the Castle of Douglas, for which I know so many schemes are formed; for which, too, none can be imagined so desperate but agents will be found bold enough to undertake the execution? A man who holds my situation, although the slave of conscience, ought to learn to set aside those false scruples which assume the appearance of flowing from our own moral feeling, whereas they are in fact instilled by the suggestion of affected delicacy. I will not, I swear by Heaven, be infected by the follies of a boy such as Aymer; I will not, that I may defer to his caprices, lose all that love, honour, and ambition can propose for the reward of twelve months' service, of a nature the most watchful and unpleasant. I will go straight to my point, and use the ordinary precautions in Scotland which I should employ in Normandy or Gascoigne. What ho! page, who waits there?'

One of his attendants replied to his summons. 'Seek me out Gilbert Greenleaf the archer, and tell him I would speak

with him touching the two bows and the sheaf of arrows concerning which I gave him a commission to Ayr.'

A few minutes intervened after the order was given, when the archer entered, holding in his hand two bow-staves, not yet fashioned, and a number of arrows secured together with a thong. He bore the mysterious looks of one whose apparent business is not of very great consequence, but is meant as a passport for other affairs which are in themselves of a secret nature. Accordingly, as the knight was silent, and afforded no other opening for Greenleaf, that judicious negotiator proceeded to enter upon such as was open to him.

'Here are the bow-staves, noble sir, which you desired me to obtain while I was at Ayr with the Earl of Pembroke's army. They are not so good as I could have wished, yet are perhaps of better quality than could have been procured by any other than a fair judge of the weapon. The Earl of Pembroke's whole camp are frantic mad in order to procure real Spanish staves from the Groyne and other ports in Spain; but though two vessels laden with such came into the port of Ayr, said to be for the King's army, yet I believe never one-half of them have come into English hands. These two grew in Sherwood, which, having been seasoned since the time of Robin Hood, are not likely to fail either in strength or in aim, in so strong a hand, and with so just an eye, as those of the men who wait on your worship.'

'And who has got the rest, since two ships' cargoes of new bow-staves are arrived at Ayr, and thou with difficulty hast only procured me two old ones?' said the governor.

'Faith, I pretend not skill enough to know,' answered Greenleaf, shrugging his shoulders. 'Talk there is of plots in that country as well as here. It is said that their Bruce and the rest of his kinsmen intend a new May-game, and that the outlawed king proposes to land near to Turnberry early in summer, with a number of stout kernes from Ireland; and no doubt the men of his mock earldom of Carrick are getting them ready with bow and spear for so hopeful an undertaking. I reckon that it will not cost us the expense of more than a few score of sheaves of arrows to put all that matter to rights.'

'Do you talk then of conspiracies in this part of the country, Greenleaf?' said De Walton. 'I know you are a sagacious fellow, well bred for many a day to the use of the bent stick and string, and will not allow such a practice to go on under thy nose without taking notice of it.'

'I am old enough, Heaven knows,' said Greenleaf, 'and have had good experience of these Scottish wars, and know well whether these native Scots are a people to be trusted to by knight or yeoman. Say they are a false generation, and say a good archer told you so, who, with a fair aim, seldom missed a hand's-breadth of the white. Ah! sir, your honour knows how to deal with them: ride them strongly and rein them hard; you are not like those simple novices who imagine that all is to be done by gentleness, and wish to parade themselves as courteous and generous to those faithless mountaineers, who never, in the course of their lives, knew any tincture either of courteousness or generosity.'

'Thou alludest to some one,' said the governor, 'and I charge thee, Gilbert, to be plain and sincere with me. Thou knowest, methinks, that in trusting me thou wilt come to no harm?'

'It is true — it is true, sir,' said the old remnant of the wars, carrying his hand to his brow; 'but it were imprudent to communicate all the remarks which float through an old man's brain in the idle moments of such a garrison as this. One stumbles unawares on fantasies as well as realities, and thus one gets, not altogether undeservedly, the character of a tale-bearer and mischief-maker among his comrades, and methinks I would not willingly fall under that accusation.'

'Speak frankly to me,' answered De Walton, 'and have no fear of being misconstrued, whosoever the conversation may concern.'

'Nay, in plain truth,' answered Gilbert, 'I fear not the greatness of this young knight, being, as I am, the oldest soldier in the garrison, and having drawn a bowstring long and many a day ere he was weaned from his nurse's breast.'

'It is then,' said De Walton, 'my lieutenant and friend, Aymer de Valence, at whom your suspicions point?'

'At nothing,' replied the archer, 'touching the honour of the young knight himself, who is as brave as the sword he wears, and, his youth considered, stands high in the roll of English chivalry; but he is young, as your worship knows, and I own that in the choice of his company he disturbs and alarms me.'

'Why, you know, Greenleaf,' answered the governor, 'that in the leisure of a garrison a knight cannot always confine his sports and pleasures among those of his own rank, who are not numerous, and may not be so gamesome or fond of frolic as he would desire them to be.'

'I know that well,' answered the archer, 'nor would I say a word concerning your honour's lieutenant for joining any honest fellows, however inferior their rank, in the wrestling-ring or at a bout of quarter-staff. But if Sir Aymer de Valence has a fondness for martial tales of former days, methinks he had better learn them from the ancient soldiers who have followed Edward the First — whom God assoilzie! — and who have known before his time the barons' wars and other onslaughts, in which the knights and archers of Merry England transmitted so many gallant actions to be recorded by fame; this truly, I say, were more beseeeming the Earl of Pembroke's nephew than to see him closet himself day after day with a strolling minstrel, who gains his livelihood by reciting nonsense and lies to such young men as are fond enough to believe him, of whom hardly any one knows whether he be English or Scottish in his opinions, and still less can any one pretend to say whether he is of English or Scottish birth, or with what purpose he lies lounging about this castle, and is left free to communicate everything which passes within it to those old mutterers of matins at St. Bride's, who say with their tongues "God save King Edward," but pray in their hearts "God save King Robert the Bruce." Such a communication he can easily carry on by means of his son, who lies at St. Bride's cell, as your worship knows, under pretence of illness.'

'How do you say?' exclaimed the governor — 'under pretence? Is he not then really indisposed?'

'Nay, he may be sick to the death for aught I know,' said the archer; 'but if so, were it not then more natural that the father should attend his son's sick-bed than that he should be ranging about this castle, where one eternally meets him in the old baron's study, or in some corner, where you least expect to find him?'

'If he has no lawful object,' replied the knight, 'it might be as you say; but he is said to be in quest of ancient poems or prophecies of Merlin, of the Rhymer, or some other old bard; and in truth it is natural for him to wish to enlarge his stock of knowledge and power of giving amusement, and where should he find the means save in a study filled with ancient books?'

'No doubt,' replied the archer, with a sort of dry, civil sneer of incredulity; 'I have seldom known an insurrection in Scotland but that it was prophesied by some old forgotten rhyme, conjured out of dust and cobwebs, for the sake of giving courage to those North Country rebels who durst not otherwise

have abidden the whistling of the grey-goose shaft; but curled heads are hasty, and, with license, even your own train, sir knight, retains too much of the fire of youth for such uncertain times as the present.'

'Thou hast convinced me, Gilbert Greenleaf, and I will look into this man's business and occupation more closely than hitherto. This is no time to peril the safety of a royal castle for the sake of affecting generosity towards a man of whom we know so little, and to whom, till we receive a very full explanation, we may, without doing him injustice, attach grave suspicions. Is he now in the apartment called the baron's study?'

'Your worship will be certain to find him there,' replied Greenleaf.

'Then follow me, with two or three of thy comrades, and keep out of sight, but within hearing: it may be necessary to arrest this man.'

'My assistance,' said the old archer, 'shall be at hand when you call, but——'

'But what?' said the knight; 'I hope I am not to find doubts and disobedience on all hands?'

'Certainly not on mine,' replied Greenleaf; 'I would only remind your worship that what I have said was a sincere opinion expressed in answer to your worship's question, and that, as Sir Aymer de Valence has avowed himself the patron of this man, I would not willingly be left to the hazard of his revenge.'

'Pshaw!' answered De Walton, 'is Aymer de Valence governor of this castle or am I? or to whom do you imagine you are responsible for answering such questions as I may put to you?'

'Nay,' replied the archer, secretly not displeased at seeing De Walton show some little jealousy of his own authority, 'believe me, sir knight, that I know my own station and your worship's, and that I am not now to be told to whom I owe obedience.'

'To the study then, and let us find the man,' said the governor.

'A fine matter indeed,' subjoined Greenleaf, following him, 'that your worship should have to go in person to look after the arrest of so mean an individual. But your honour is right: these minstrels are often jugglers, and possess a power of making their escape by means which border¹ folk like myself are disposed to attribute to necromancy.'

¹ Unlearned.

Without attending to these last words, Sir John de Walton set forth towards the study, walking at a quick pace, as if this conversation had augmented his desire to find himself in possession of the person of the suspected minstrel.

Traversing the ancient passages of the castle, the governor had no difficulty in reaching the study, which was strongly vaulted with stone, and furnished with a sort of iron cabinet, intended for the preservation of articles and papers of value, in case of fire. Here he found the minstrel seated at a small table, sustaining before him a manuscript, apparently of great antiquity, from which he seemed engaged in making extracts. The windows of the room were very small, and still showed some traces that they had originally been glazed with a painted history of St. Bride — another mark of the devotion of the great family of Douglas to their tutelar saint.

The minstrel, who had seemed deeply wrapped in the contemplation of his task, on being disturbed by the unlooked-for entrance of Sir John de Walton, rose with every mark of respect and humility, and, remaining standing in the governor's presence, appeared to wait for his interrogation. The Bruce anticipated that the visit concerned himself, and of his

'I am to suppose, sir minstrel,' said Sir John, 'that you have been successful in your search, under the roll of poetry or prophecies that I have placed amongst these broken shelves and tattered volumes?'

'More successful than I could have expected,' replied the minstrel, 'considering the effects of the conflagration. This sir knight, is apparently the fatal volume for which I sought, and strange it is, considering the heavy chance of other books contained in this library, that I have been able to find a few, though imperfect, fragments of it.'

'Since, therefore, you have been permitted to indulge your curiosity,' said the governor, 'I trust, minstrel, you will have no objection to satisfy my curiosity?'

The minstrel replied with the same humility, 'that, if there was anything within my compass of his skill which could gratify Sir John de Walton in any degree, he would but reach his lute and presently obey his commands.'

'You mistake, sir,' said Sir John, somewhat harshly. 'I am none of those who have hours to spend in listening to tales or music of former days: my life has hardly given me time enough for learning the duties of my profession, far less has it allowed me leisure for such twangling follies. I care not who knows it,

but my ear is so incapable of judging of your art, which you doubtless think a noble one, that I can scarcely tell the modulation of one tune from another.'

'In that case,' replied the minstrel, composedly, 'I can hardly promise myself the pleasure of affording your worship the amusement which I might otherwise have done.'

'Nor do I look for any at your hand,' said the governor, advancing a step nearer to him, and speaking in a sterner tone. 'I want information, sir, which I am assured you can give me, if you incline; and it is my duty to tell you that, if you show unwillingness to speak the truth, I know means by which it will become my painful duty to extort it in a more disagreeable manner than I would wish.'

'If your questions, sir knight,' answered Bertram, 'be such as I can or ought to answer, there shall be no occasion to put them more than one. If they are such as I cannot or ought not to reply to, believe me that no threats of violence will extort an answer from me.'

'You speak boldly,' said Sir John de Walton; 'but take my word for it, that your courage will be put to the test. I am as little fond of proceeding to such extremities as you can be of undergoing them, but such will be the natural consequence of your own obstinacy. I therefore ask you, whether Bertram be your real name; whether you have any other profession than that of a travelling minstrel; and, lastly, whether you have any acquaintance or connexion with any Englishman or Scottishman beyond the walls of this Castle of Douglas?'

'To these questions,' replied the minstrel, 'I have already answered the worshipful knight, Sir Aymer de Valence, and, having fully satisfied him, it is not, I conceive, necessary that I should undergo a second examination; nor is it consistent either with your worship's honour or that of the lieutenant-governor that such a re-examination should take place.'

'You are very considerate,' replied the governor, 'of my honour and of that of Sir Aymer de Valence. Take my word for it, they are both in perfect safety in our own keeping, and may dispense with your attention. I ask you, will you answer the inquiries which it is my duty to make, or am I to enforce obedience by putting you under the penalties of the question? I have already, it is my duty to say, seen the answers you have returned to my lieutenant, and they do not satisfy me.'

He at the same time clapped his hands, and two or three

archers showed themselves, stripped of their tunics, and only attired in their shirts and hose.

'I understand,' said the minstrel, 'that you intend to inflict upon me a punishment which is foreign to the genius of the English laws, in that no proof is adduced of my guilt. I have already told that I am by birth an Englishman, by profession a minstrel, and that I am totally unconnected with any person likely to nourish any design against this Castle of Douglas, Sir John de Walton, or his garrison. What answers you may extort from me by bodily agony, I cannot, to speak as a plain-dealing Christian, hold myself responsible for. I think that I can endure as much pain as any one; I am sure that I never yet felt a degree of agony that I would not willingly prefer to breaking my plighted word, or becoming a false informer against innocent persons; but I own I do not know the extent to which the art of torture may be carried; and though I do not fear you, Sir John de Walton, yet I must acknowledge that I fear myself, since I know not to what extremity your cruelty may be capable of subjecting me, or how far I may be enabled to bear it. I, therefore, in the first place, protest, that I shall in no manner be liable for any words which I may utter in the course of any examination enforced from me by torture; and you must therefore, under such circumstances, proceed to the execution of an office which, permit me to say, is hardly that which I expected to have found thus administered by an accomplished knight like yourself.'

'Hark you, sir,' replied the governor, 'you and I are at issue, and in doing my duty I ought instantly to proceed to the extremities I have threatened; but perhaps you yourself feel less reluctance to undergo the examination as proposed than I shall do in commanding it; I will therefore consign you for the present to a place of confinement suitable to one who is suspected of being a spy upon this fortress. Until you are pleased to remove such suspicions, your lodgings and nourishment are those of a prisoner. In the meantime, before subjecting you to the question, take notice, I will myself ride to the abbey of St. Bride, and satisfy myself whether the young person whom you would pass as your son is possessed of the same determination as that which you yourself seem to assert. It may so happen that his examination and yours may throw such light upon each other as will decidedly prove either your guilt or innocence, without its being confirmed by the use of the extraordinary question. If it be otherwise, tremble for

your son's sake, if not for your own. Have I shaken you, sir; or do you fear for your boy's young sinews and joints the engines which, in your own case, you seem willing to defy?' 'Sir,' answered the minstrel, recovering from the momentary emotion he had shown, 'I leave it to yourself, as a man of honour and candour, whether you ought, in common fairness, to form a worse opinion of any man because he is not unwilling to incur in his own person severities which he would not desire to be inflicted upon his child, a sickly youth, just recovering from a dangerous disease.'

'It is my duty,' answered De Walton, after a short pause, 'to leave no stone unturned by which this business may be traced to the source; and if thou desirest mercy for thy son, thou wilt thyself most easily attain it by setting him the example of honesty and plain-dealing.'

The minstrel threw himself back on the seat, as if fully resolved to bear every extremity that could be inflicted, rather than make any farther answer than he had already offered. Sir John de Walton himself seemed in some degree uncertain what might now be his best course. He felt an invincible repugnance to proceed, without due consideration, in what most people would have deemed the direct line of his duty, by inflicting the torture both upon father and son; but deep as was his sense of devotion towards the King, and numerous as were the hopes and expectations he had formed upon the strict discharge of his present high trust, he could not resolve upon having recourse at once to this cruel method of cutting the knot. Bertram's appearance was venerable, and his power of words not unworthy of his aspect and bearing. The governor remembered that Aymer de Valence, whose judgment in general it was impossible to deny, had described him as one of those rare individuals who vindicated the honour of a corrupted profession by their personal good behaviour; and he acknowledged to himself that there was gross cruelty and injustice in refusing to admit the prisoner to the credit of being a true and honest man until, by way of proving his rectitude, he had strained every sinew and crushed every joint in his body, as well as those of his son. 'I have no touchstone,' he said internally, 'which can distinguish truth from falsehood. The Bruce and his followers are on the alert: he has certainly equipped the galleys which lay at Rachrin during winter. This story, too, of Greenleaf, about arms being procured for a new insurrection, tallies strangely with the appearance of that

savage-looking forester at the hunt; and all tends to show that something is upon the anvil which it is my duty to provide against. I will, therefore, pass over no circumstance by which I can affect the mind through hope or fear; but, please God to give me light from any other source, I will not think it lawful to torment these unfortunate, and, it may yet be, honest, men.' He accordingly took his departure from the library, whispering a word to Greenleaf respecting the prisoner.

He had reached the outward door of the study, and his satellites had already taken the minstrel into their grasp, when the voice of the old man was heard calling upon De Walton to return for a single moment.

'What hast thou to say, sir?' said the governor. 'Be speedy, for I have already lost more time in listening to thee than I am answerable for, and so I advise thee for thine own sake ——'

'I advise thee,' said the minstrel, 'for thine own sake, Sir John de Walton, to beware how thou dost insist on thy present purpose, by which thou thyself alone, of all men living, will most severely suffer. If thou harrest a hair of that young man's head — nay, if thou permittest him to undergo any privation which it is in thy power to prevent — thou wilt, in doing so, prepare for thine own suffering a degree of agony more acute than anything else in this mortal world could cause thee. I swear by the most blessed objects of our holy religion, I call to witness that holy sepulchre, of which I have been an unworthy visitor, that I speak nothing but the truth, and that thou wilt one day testify thy gratitude for the part I am now acting. It is my interest, as well as yours, to secure you in the safe possession of this castle, although assuredly I know some things respecting it, and respecting your worship, which I am not at liberty to tell without the consent of that youth. Bring me but a note under his hand, consenting to my taking you into our mystery, and believe me, you will soon see those clouds charmed away; since there was never a doleful uncertainty which more speedily changed to joy, or a thunder-cloud of adversity which more instantly gave way to sunshine, than would then the suspicions which appear now so formidable.'

He spoke with so much earnestness as to make some impression upon Sir John de Walton, who was once more wholly at a loss to know what line his duty called upon him to pursue.

'I would most gladly,' said the governor, 'follow out my

purpose by the gentlest means in my power, and I shall bring no further distress upon this poor lad than thine own obstinacy and his shall appear to deserve. In the meantime, think, sir minstrel, that my duty has limits, and if I slack it for a day, it will become thee to exert every effort in thy power to meet my condescension. I will give thee leave to address thy son by a line under thy hand, and I will await his answer before I proceed farther in this matter, which seems to be very mysterious. Meantime, as thou hast a soul to be saved, I conjure thee to speak the truth, and tell me whether the secrets of which thou seemest to be a too faithful treasurer have regard to the practices of Douglas, of Bruce, or of any in their names, against this Castle of Douglas ?

The prisoner thought a moment, and then replied — ‘I am aware, sir knight, of the severe charge under which this command is entrusted to your hands, and were it in my power to assist you, as a faithful minstrel and loyal subject, either with hand or tongue, I should feel myself called upon so to do ; but so far am I from being the character your suspicions have apprehended, that I should have held it for certain that the Bruce and Douglas had assembled their followers, for the purpose of renouncing their rebellious attempts, and taking their departure for the Holy Land, but for the apparition of the forester who, I hear, bearded you at the hunting, which impresses upon me the belief that, when so resolute a follower and henchman of the Douglas was sitting fearless among you, his master and comrades could be at no great distance. How far his intentions could be friendly to you, I must leave it to yourself to judge ; only believe me thus far, that the rack, pulley, or pincers would not have compelled me to act the informer, or adviser, in a quarrel wherein I have little or no share, if I had not been desirous of fixing the belief upon you that you are dealing with a true man, and one who has your welfare at heart. Meanwhile, permit me to have writing-materials, or let my own be restored, for I possess, in some degree, the higher arts of my calling ; nor do I fear but that I can procure for you an explanation of these marvels, without much more loss of time.’

‘God grant it prove so,’ said the governor ; ‘though I see not well how I can hope for so favourable a termination, and I may sustain great harm by trusting too much on the present occasion. My duty, however, requires that, in the meantime, you be removed into strict confinement.’

He handed to the prisoner as he spoke the writing-materials, which had been seized upon by the archers on their first entrance, and then commanded those satellites to unhand the minstrel.

'I must, then,' said Bertram, 'remain subjected to all the severities of a strict captivity? But I deprecate no hardship whatever in my own person, so I may secure you from acting with a degree of rashness of which you will all your life repent, without the means of atoning.'

'No more words, minstrel,' said the governor; 'but since I have made my choice, perhaps a very dangerous one for myself, let us carry this spell into execution, which thou sayest is to serve me, as mariners say that oil spread upon the raging billows will assuage their fury.'

CHAPTER IX

Beware ! beware ! of the Black Friar.

He still retains his sway,
For he is yet the church's heir by right,
Whoever may be the lay,
Amundeville is lord by day,
But the monk is lord by night,
Nor wine nor wassel could raise a vassal
To question that friar's right.

Don Juan, Canto xvii.

THE minstrel made no vain boast of the skill which he possessed in the use of pen and ink. In fact, no priest of the time could have produced his little scroll more speedily, more neatly composed, or more fairly written, than were the lines addressed 'To the youth called Augustine, son of Bertram the Minstrel.'

'I have not folded this letter,' said he, 'nor tied it with silk, for it is not expressed so as to explain the mystery to you ; nor, to speak frankly, do I think that it can convey to you any intelligence ; but it may be satisfactory to show you what the letter does not contain, and that it is written from and to a person who both mean kindly towards you and your garrison.'

'That,' said the governor, 'is a deception which is easily practised ; it tends, however, to show, though not with certainty, that you are disposed to act upon good faith ; and until the contrary appear, I shall consider it a point of duty to treat you with as much gentleness as the matter admits of. Meantime, I will myself ride to the abbey of St. Bride, and in person examine the young prisoner ; and as you say he has the power, so I pray to Heaven he may have the will, to read this riddle, which seems to throw us all into confusion.' So saying, he ordered his horse, and while it was getting ready, he perused with great composure the minstrel's letter. Its contents ran thus :—

'DEAR AUGUSTINE—

'Sir John de Walton, the governor of this castle, has conceived those suspicions which I pointed out as likely to be the consequence of our coming to this country without an avowed errand. I at least am seized, and threatened with examination under torture, to force me to tell the purpose of our journey; but they shall tear my flesh from my bones ere they force me to break the oath which I have taken. And the purport of this letter is to apprise you of the danger in which you stand of being placed in similar circumstances, unless you are disposed to authorise me to make the discovery to this knight; but on this subject you have only to express your own wishes, being assured they shall be in every respect attended to by your devoted

BERTRAM.'

This letter did not throw the smallest light upon the mystery of the writer. The governor read it more than once, and turned it repeatedly in his hand, as if he had hoped by that mechanical process to draw something from the missive which at a first view the words did not express; but as no result of this sort appeared, De Walton retired to the hall, where he informed Sir Aymer de Valence that he was going abroad as far as the abbey of St. Bride, and that he would be obliged by his taking upon him the duties of governor during his absence. Sir Aymer, of course, intimated his acquiescence in the charge; and the state of disunion in which they stood to each other permitted no further explanation.

Upon the arrival of Sir John de Walton at the dilapidated shrine, the abbot, with trembling haste, made it his business immediately to attend the commander of the English garrison, upon whom, for the present, their house depended for every indulgence they experienced, as well as for the subsistence and protection necessary to them in so perilous a period. Having interrogated this old man respecting the youth residing in the abbey, De Walton was informed that he had been indisposed since left there by his father, Bertram, a minstrel. It appeared to the abbot that his indisposition might be of that contagious kind which, at that period, ravaged the English Borders, and made some incursions into Scotland, where it afterwards worked a fearful progress. After some farther conversation, Sir John de Walton put into the abbot's hand the letter to the young person under his roof; on delivering which to Augustine, the reverend father was charged with a message to the English

governor so bold that he was afraid to be the bearer of it. It signified that the youth could not, and would not, at that moment receive the English knight; but that, if he came back on the morrow after mass, it was probable he might learn something of what was requested.

'This is not an answer,' said Sir John de Walton, 'to be sent by a boy like this to a person in my charge; and methinks, father abbot, you consult your own safety but slenderly in delivering such an insolent message.'

The abbot trembled under the folds of his large coarse habit; and De Walton, imagining that his discomposure was the consequence of guilty fear, called upon him to remember the duties which he owed to England, the benefits which he had received from himself, and the probable consequence of taking part in a pert boy's insolent defiance of the power of the governor of the province.

The abbot vindicated himself from these charges with the utmost anxiety. He pledged his sacred word that the inconsiderate character of the boy's message was owing to the awkwardness arising from indisposition. He reminded the governor that, as a Christian and an Englishman, he had duties to observe towards the community of St. Bride, which had never given the English government the least subject of complaint. As he spoke, the churchman seemed to gather courage from the immunities of his order. He said he could not permit a sick boy, who had taken refuge within the sanctuary of the church, to be seized or subjected to any species of force, unless he was accused of a specific crime, capable of being immediately proved. The Douglasses, a headstrong race, had, in former days, uniformly respected the sanctuary of St. Bride, and it was not to be supposed that the King of England, the dutiful and obedient child of the Church of Rome, would act with less veneration for her rights than the followers of a usurper, homicide, and excommunicated person like Robert Bruce.

Walton was considerably shaken with this remonstrance. He knew that, in the circumstances of the times, the Pope had great power in every controversy in which it was his pleasure to interfere. He knew that, even in the dispute respecting the supremacy of Scotland, his Holiness had set up a claim to the kingdom which, in the temper of the times, might perhaps have been deemed superior both to that of Robert Bruce and that of Edward of England, and he conceived his monarch would give him little thanks for any fresh embroilment which

might take place with the church. Moreover, it was easy to place a watch, so as to prevent Augustine from escaping during the night; and on the following morning he would be still as effectually in the power of the English governor as if he were seized on by open force at the present moment. Sir John de Walton, however, so far exerted his authority over the abbot, that he engaged, in consideration of the sanctuary being respected for this space of time, that, when it expired, he would be aiding and assisting with his spiritual authority to surrender the youth, should he not allege a sufficient reason to the contrary. This arrangement, which appeared still to flatter the governor with the prospect of an easy termination of this troublesome dispute, induced him to grant the delay which Augustine rather demanded than petitioned for.

‘At your request, father abbot, whom I have hitherto found a true man, I will indulge this youth with the grace he asks before taking him into custody, understanding that he shall not be permitted to leave this place; and thou art to be responsible to this effect, giving thee, as is reasonable, power to command our little garrison at Hazelside, to which I will send a reinforcement on my return to the castle, in case it should be necessary to use the strong hand, or circumstances impose upon me other measures.’

‘Worthy sir knight,’ replied the abbot, ‘I have no idea that the forwardness of this youth will render any course necessary saving that of persuasion; and I venture to say that you yourself will in the highest degree approve of the method in which I shall acquit myself of my present trust.’

The abbot went through the duties of hospitality, enumerating what simple cheer the cloister of the convent permitted him to offer to the English knight. Sir John de Walton declined the offer of refreshment, however, took a courteous leave of the churchman, and did not spare his horse until the noble animal had brought him again before the Castle of Douglas.

Sir Aymer de Valence met him on the drawbridge, and reported the state of the garrison to be the same in which he had left it, excepting that intimation had been received that twelve or fifteen men were expected on their way to the town of Lanark; and being on march from the neighbourhood of Ayr, would that night take up their quarters at the outpost of Hazelside.

‘I am glad of it,’ replied the governor: ‘I was about to strengthen that detachment. This stripling, the son of Ber-

tram the minstrel, or whoever he is, has engaged to deliver himself up for examination in the morning. As this party of soldiers are followers of your uncle, Lord Pembroke, may I request you will ride to meet them, and command them to remain at Hazelside until you make farther inquiries about this youth, who has still to clear up the mystery which hangs about him, and reply to a letter which I delivered with my own hand to the abbot of St. Bride. I have shown too much forbearance in this matter, and I trust to your looking to the security of this young man, and conveying him hither, with all due care and attention, as being a prisoner of some importance.'

'Certainly, Sir John,' answered Sir Aymer; 'your orders shall be obeyed, since you have none of greater importance for one who hath the honour to be second only to yourself in this place.'

'I crave your mercy, Sir Aymer,' returned the governor, 'if the commission be in any degree beneath your dignity; but it is our misfortune to misunderstand each other, when we endeavour to be most intelligible.'

'But what am I to do,' said Sir Aymer — 'no way disputing your command, but only asking for information — what am I to do, if the abbot of St. Bride offers opposition?'

'How!' answered Sir John de Walton; 'with the reinforcement from my Lord of Pembroke, you will command at least twenty war-men, with bow and spear, against five or six timid old monks, with only gown and hood.'

'True,' said Sir Aymer, 'but ban and excommunication are sometimes, in the present day, too hard for the mail coat, and I would not willingly be thrown out of the pale of the Christian church.'

'Well, then, thou very suspicious and scrupulous young man,' replied De Walton, 'know that, if this youth does not deliver himself up to thee of his own accord, the abbot has promised to put him into thy hands.'

There was no farther answer to be made, and De Valence, though still thinking himself unnecessarily harassed with the charge of a petty commission, took the sort of half arms which were always used when the knights stirred beyond the walls of the garrison, and proceeded to execute the commands of De Walton. A horseman or two, together with his squire Fabian, accompanied him.

The evening closed in with one of those Scottish mists which are commonly said to be equal to the showers of happier

climates ; the path became more and more dark, the hills more wreathed in vapours, and more difficult to traverse ; and all the little petty inconveniences which rendered travelling through the district slow and uncertain were augmented by the density of the fog which overhung everything.

Sir Aymer, therefore, occasionally mended his pace, and often incurred the fate of one who is over-late, delaying himself by his efforts to make greater expedition. The knight bethought himself that he would get into a straight road by passing through the almost deserted town of Douglas, the inhabitants of which had been treated so severely by the English, in the course of those fierce troubles, that most of them who were capable of bearing arms had left it, and withdrawn themselves to different parts of the country. This almost deserted place was defended by a rude palisade, and a ruder drawbridge, which gave entrance into streets so narrow as to admit with difficulty three horses abreast, and evincing with what strictness the ancient lords of the village adhered to their prejudice against fortifications, and their opinion in favour of keeping the field, so quaintly expressed in the well-known proverb of the family — ‘It is better to hear the lark sing than the mouse cheep.’ The streets, or rather the lanes, were dark but for a shifting gleam of moonlight, which, as that planet began to rise, was now and then visible upon some steep and narrow gable. No sound of domestic industry or domestic festivity was heard, and no ray of candle or firelight glanced from the windows of the houses : the ancient ordinance called the curfew, which the Conqueror had introduced into England, was at this time in full force in such parts of Scotland as were thought doubtful, and likely to rebel, under which description it need not be said the ancient possessions of the Douglas were most especially regarded. The church, whose Gothic monuments were of a magnificent character, had been, as far as possible, destroyed by fire ; but the ruins, held together by the weight of the massive stones of which they were composed, still sufficiently evinced the greatness of the family at whose cost it had been raised, and whose bones, from immemorial time, had been entombed in its crypts.

Paying little attention to these relics of departed splendour, Sir Aymer de Valence advanced with his small detachment, and had passed the scattered fragments of the cemetery of the Douglasses, when, to his surprise, the noise of his horse’s feet was seemingly replied to by sounds which rung like those of

another knightly steed advancing heavily up the street, as if it were to meet him. Valence was unable to conjecture what might be the cause of these warlike sounds; the ring and the clang of armour was distinct, and the heavy tramp of a war-horse was not to be mistaken by the ear of a warrior. The difficulty of keeping soldiers from straying out of quarters by night would have sufficiently accounted for the appearance of a straggling foot-soldier; but it was more difficult to account for a mounted horseman, in full armour; and such was the apparition which a peculiarly bright glimpse of moonlight now showed at the bottom of the causewayed hill. Perhaps the unknown warrior obtained at the same time a glance of Aymer de Valence and his armed followers—at least each of them shouted, ‘Who goes there?’ the alarm of the times; and on the instant the deep answers of ‘St. George!’ on the one side, and ‘The Douglas!’ on the other, awakened the still echoes of the small and ruinous street, and the silent arches of the dilapidated church. Astonished at a war-cry with which so many recollections were connected, the English knight spurred his horse at full gallop down the steep and broken descent leading out at the south or south-east gate of the town; and it was the work of an instant to call out, ‘Ho! St. George! upon the insolent villain all of you! To the gate, Fabian, and cut him off from flight! St. George! I say, for England! Bows and bills—bows and bills!’ At the same time Aymer de Valence laid in rest his own long lance, which he snatched from the squire by whom it was carried. But the light was seen and gone in an instant, and though De Valence concluded that the hostile warrior had hardly room to avoid his career, yet he could take no aim for the encounter, unless by mere guess, and continued to plunge down the dark declivity, among shattered stones and other encumbrances, without groping out with his lance the object of his pursuit. He rode, in short, at a broken gallop, a descent of about fifty or sixty yards, without having any reason to suppose that he had met the figure which had appeared to him, although the narrowness of the street scarcely admitted his having passed him, unless both horse and horseman could have melted at the moment of encounter like an air-bubble. The riders of his suite, meanwhile, were struck with a feeling like supernatural terror, which a number of singular adventures had caused most of them to attach to the name of Douglas; and when he reached the gate by which the broken street was terminated, there was none close behind him but Fabian, in

whose head no suggestions of a timorous nature could outlive the sound of his dear master's voice.

Here there was a post of English archers, who were turning out in considerable alarm, when De Valence and his page rode in amongst them. 'Villains!' shouted De Valence, 'why were you not upon your duty? Who was it passed through your post even now, with the traitorous cry of "Douglas"?'

'We know of no such,' said the captain of the watch.

'That is to say, you besotted villains,' answered the young knight, 'you have been drinking, and have slept?'

The men protested the contrary, but in a confused manner, which was far from overcoming De Valence's suspicions. He called loudly to bring cressets, torches, and candles; and a few remaining inhabitants began to make their unwilling appearance, with such various means of giving light as they chanced to possess. They heard the story of the young English knight with wonder; nor, although it was confirmed by all his retinue, did they give credit to the recital, more than that the Englishmen wished somehow or other to pick a quarrel with the people of the place, under the pretence of their having admitted a retainer of their ancient lord by night into the town. They protested, therefore, their innocence of the cause of tumult, and endeavoured to seem active in hastening from house to house, and corner to corner, with their torches, in order to discover the invisible cavalier. The English suspected them no less of treachery than the Scottish imagined the whole matter a pretext for bringing an accusation, on the part of the young knight, against the citizens. The women, however, who now began to issue from the houses, had a key for the solution of the apparition, which at that time was believed of efficacy sufficient to solve any mystery. 'The Devil,' they said, 'must have appeared visibly amongst them'—an explanation which had already occurred to the followers of the young knight; for that a living man and horse, both, as it seemed, of a gigantic size, could be conjured in the twinkling of an eye, and appear in a street secured at one end by the best of the archers, and at the other by the horsemen under Valence himself, was altogether, it seemed, a thing impossible. The inhabitants did not venture to put their thoughts on the subject into language, for fear of giving offence, and only indicated by a passing word to each other the secret degree of pleasure which they felt in the confusion and embarrassment of the English garrison. Still, however, they continued to affect

a great deal of interest in the alarm which De Valence had received, and the anxiety which he expressed to discover the cause.

At length a female voice spoke above the Babel of confused sounds, saying, 'Where is the Southern knight? I am sure that I can tell him where he can find the only person who can help him out of his present difficulty.'

'And who is that, good woman?' said Aymer de Valence, who was growing every moment more impatient at the loss of time, which was flying fast, in an investigation which had something vexatious in it, and even ridiculous. At the same time, the sight of an armed partizan of the Douglasses, in their own native town, seemed to bode too serious consequences, if it should be suffered to pass without being probed to the bottom.

'Come hither to me,' said the female voice, 'and I will name to you the only person who can explain all matters of this kind that chance in this country.' On this the knight snatched a torch from some of those who were present, and, holding it up, descried the person who spoke—a tall woman, who evidently endeavoured to render herself remarkable. When he approached her, she communicated her intelligence in a grave and sententious tone of voice.

'We had once wise men that could have answered any parables which might have been put to them for explanation in this country-side. Whether you yourselves, gentlemen, have not had some hand in weeding them out, good troth, it is not for the like of me to say; at any rate, good counsel is not so easy come by as it was in this Douglas country, nor, maybe, is it a safe thing to pretend to the power of giving it.'

'Good woman,' said De Valence, 'if you will give me an explanation of this mystery, I will owe you a kirtle of the best raploch grey.'

'It is not I,' said the old woman, 'that pretend to possess the knowledge which may assist you; but I would fain know that the man whom I shall name to you shall be scathless and harmless. Upon your knighthood and your honour, will you promise to me so much?'

'Assuredly,' said De Valence, 'such a person shall even have thanks and reward, if he is a faithful informer; ay, and pardon, moreover, although he may have listened to any dangerous practices, or been concerned in any plots.'

'Oh! not he,' replied the female; 'it is old Goodman Powheid, who has the charge of the muniments (meaning probably

monuments)—that is, such part of them as you English have left standing; I mean the old sexton of the kirk of Douglas, who can tell more stories of these old folk, whom your honour is not very fond of hearing named, than would last us from this day to Yule.'

'Does anybody,' said the knight, 'know whom it is that this old woman means?'

'I conjecture,' replied Fabian, 'that she speaks of an old dotard, who is, I think, the general referee concerning the history and antiquities of this old town, and of the savage family that lived here, perhaps before the flood.'

'And who, I daresay,' said the knight, 'knows as much about the matter as she herself does. But where is this man? A sexton is he? He may be acquainted with places of concealment, which are often fabricated in Gothic buildings, and known to those whose business calls them to frequent them. Come, my good old dame, bring this man to me; or, what may be better, I will go to him, for we have already spent too much time.'

'Time!' replied the old woman—'is time an object with your honour? I am sure I can hardly get so much for mine as will hold soul and body together. You are not far from the old man's house.'

She led the way accordingly, blundering over heaps of rubbish, and encountering all the embarrassments of a ruinous street, in lighting the way to Sir Aymer, who, giving his horse to one of his attendants, and desiring Fabian to be ready at a call, scrambled after as well as the slowness of his guide would permit.

Both were soon involved in the remains of the old church, much dilapidated as it had been by wanton damage done to it by the soldiery, and so much impeded by rubbish, that the knight marvelled how the old woman could find the way. She kept talking all the while as she stumbled onward. Sometimes she called out in a screeching tone, 'Powheid!—Lazarus Powheid!' and then muttered—'Ay—ay, the old man will be busy with some of his duties, as he calls them; I wonder he fashes w' them in these times. But never mind, I warrant they will last for his day, and for mine; and the times, Lord help us! for all that I can see, are well enough for those that are to live in them.'

'Are you sure, good woman,' replied the knight, 'that there is any inhabitant in these ruins? For my part, I should rather

suppose that you are taking me to the charnel-house of the dead.'

'Maybe you are right,' said the old woman, with a ghastly laugh; 'carles and earlines agree weel with funeral vaults and charnel-houses, and when an auld bedral dwells near the dead, he is living, ye ken, among his customers. Halloo, Powheid!—Lazarus Powheid! there is a gentleman would speak with you'; and she added, with some sort of emphasis—'an English noble gentleman, one of the honourable garrison.'

An old man's step was now heard advancing, so slowly that the glimmering light which he held in his hand was visible on the ruined walls of the vault some time before it showed the person who bore it.

The shadow of the old man was also projected upon the illuminated wall ere his person came in view; his dress was in considerable confusion, owing to his having been roused from his bed; and since artificial light was forbidden by the regulations of the garrison, the natives of Douglas Dale spent in sleep the time that they could not very well get rid of by any other means. The sexton was a tall, thin man, emaciated by years and by privations; his body was bent habitually by his occupation of grave-digging, and his eye naturally inclined downwards to the scene of his labours. His hand sustained the cruise or little lamp, which he held so as to throw light upon his visitant; at the same time it displayed to the young knight the features of the person with whom he was now confronted, which, though neither handsome nor pleasing, were strongly marked, sagacious, and venerable, indicating, at the same time, a certain air of dignity, which age, even mere poverty, may be found occasionally to bestow, as conferring that last melancholy species of independence proper to those whose situation can hardly, by any imaginable means, be rendered much worse than years and fortune have already made it. The habit of a lay brother added somewhat of religious importance to his appearance.

'What would you with me, young man?' said the sexton. 'Your youthful features and your gay dress bespeak one who stands in need of my ministry neither for himself nor for others.'

'I am, indeed,' replied the knight, 'a living man, and therefore need not either shovel or pick-axe for my own behoof. I am not, as you see, attired in mourning, and therefore need not your offices in behalf of any friend: I would only ask you a few questions.'

'What you would have done must needs be done, you being at present one of our rulers, and, as I think, a man of authority,' replied the sexton. 'Follow me this way into my poor habitation; I have had a better in my day, and yet, Heaven knows, it is good enough for me, when many men of much greater consequence must perforce content themselves with worse.'

He opened a lowly door, which was fitted, though irregularly, to serve as the entrance of a vaulted apartment, where it appeared that the old man held, apart from the living world, his wretched and solitary dwelling.¹ The floor, composed of paving-stones, laid together with some accuracy, and here and there inscribed with letters and hieroglyphics, as if they had once upon a time served to distinguish sepulchres, was indifferently well swept, and a fire at the upper end directed its smoke into a hole which served for a chimney. The spade and pick-axe, with other tools, which the chamberlain of mortality makes use of, lay scattered about the apartment, and, with a rude stool or two and a table, where some inexperienced hand had unquestionably supplied the labours of the joiner, were nearly the only furniture, if we include the old man's bed of straw, lying in a corner, and discomposed, as if he had been just raised from it. At the lower end of the apartment, the wall was almost entirely covered by a large escutcheon, such as is usually hung over the graves of men of very high rank, having the appropriate quarters, to the number of sixteen, each properly blazoned and distinct, placed as ornaments around the principal armorial coat itself.

'Let us sit,' said the old man: 'the posture will better enable my failing ears to apprehend your meaning, and the asthma will deal with me more mercifully in permitting me to make you understand mine.'

A peal of short asthmatic coughs attested the violence of the disorder which he had last named, and the young knight followed his host's example, in sitting down on one of the rickety stools by the side of the fire. The old man brought from one corner of the apartment an apron, which he occasionally wore, full of broken boards in irregular pieces, some of which were covered with black cloth, or driven full of nails, black, as it might happen, or gilded.

'You will find this fresh fuel necessary,' said the old man, 'to keep some degree of heat within this waste apartment; nor are the vapours of mortality, with which this vault is apt to be

¹ See *Ruin of Douglas Church*. Note 7.

filled, if the fire is permitted to become extinct, indifferent to the lungs of the dainty and the healthy, like your worship, though to me they are become habitual. The wood will catch fire, although it is some time ere the damps of the grave are overcome by the drier air and the warmth of the chimney.'

Accordingly, the relics of mortality with which the old man had heaped his fireplace began by degrees to send forth a thick, unctuous vapour, which at length leaped to light, and, blazing up the aperture, gave a degree of liveliness to the gloomy scene. The blazonry of the huge escutcheon met, and returned the rays with as brilliant a reflection as that lugubrious object was capable of, and the whole apartment looked with a fantastic gaiety, strangely mingled with the gloomy ideas which its ornaments were calculated to impress upon the imagination.

'You are astonished,' said the old man, 'and perhaps, sir knight, you have never before seen these relics of the dead applied to the purpose of rendering the living, in some degree, more comfortable than their condition would otherwise admit of.'

'Comfortable!' returned the knight of Valence, shrugging his shoulders; 'I should be sorry, old man, to know that I had a dog that was as indifferently quartered as thou art, whose grey hairs have certainly seen better days.'

'It may be,' answered the sexton, 'and it may be otherwise; but it was not, I presume, concerning my own history that your worship seemed disposed to ask me some questions; and I would venture to inquire, therefore, to whom they have relation?'

'I will speak plainly to you,' replied Sir Aymer, 'and you will at once acknowledge the necessity of giving a short and distinct reply. I have even now met in the streets of this village a person only shown to me by a single flash of light, who had the audacity to display the armorial insignia and utter the war-cry of the Douglasses; nay, if I could trust a transient glance, this daring cavalier had the features and the dark complexion proper to the Douglas. I am referred to thee as to one who possesses means of explaining this extraordinary circumstance, which, as an English knight, and one holding a charge under King Edward, I am particularly called upon to make inquiry into.'

'Let me make a distinction,' said the old man. 'The Douglasses of former generations are my near neighbours, and,

according to my superstitious townsmen, my acquaintances and visitors ; I can take it upon my conscience to be answerable for their good behaviour, and to become bound that none of the old barons, to whom the roots of that mighty tree may, it is said, be traced, will again disturb with their war-cry the towns or villages of their native country : not one will parade in moon-shine the black armour which has long rusted upon their tombs.

The knights are dust,
And their good swords are rust ;
Their souls are with the saints, we trust.¹

Look around, sir knight, you have above and around you the men of whom we speak. Beneath us, in a little aisle, which hath not been opened since these thin grey locks were thick and brown, there lies the first man whom I can name as memorable among those of this mighty line. It is he whom the Thane of Athol pointed out to the King of Scotland as Sholto Dhuglass, or the dark, iron-coloured man, whose exertions had gained the battle for his native prince ; and who, according to this legend, bequeathed his name to our dale and town, though others say that the race assumed the name of Douglas from the stream so called in unrecorded times, before they had their fastness on its banks. Others, his descendants, called Eachain, or Hector the first, and Orodh, or Hugh, William, the first of that name, and Gilmour, the theme of many a minstrel song, commemorating achievements done under the oriflamme of Charles the Great, Emperor of France, have all consigned themselves to their last sleep, nor has their memory been sufficiently preserved from the waste of time. Something we know concerning their great deeds, their great power, and, alas ! their great crimes. Something we also know of a Lord of Douglas who sat in a parliament at Forfar, held by King Malcolm the First, and we are aware that, from his attachment to hunting the wild hart, he built himself a tower called Black-house, in the Forest of Ettrick, which perhaps still exists.'

'I crave your forgiveness, old man,' said the knight, 'but I have no time at present to bestow upon the recitation of the pedigree of the house of Douglas. A less matter would hold a well-breathed minstrel in subject for recitation for a calendar month, Sundays and holidays included.'

'What other information can you expect from me,' said the sexton, 'than that respecting those heroes, some of whom it

¹ See Fragment by Coleridge. Note 8.

has been my lot to consign to that eternal rest which will for ever divide the dead from the duties of this world? I have told you where the race sleep down to the reign of the royal Malcolm. I can tell you also of another vault, in which lie Sir John of Douglas Burn, with his son Lord Archibald, and a third William, known by an indenture with Lord Abernethy. Lastly, I can tell you of him to whom that escutcheon, with its appurtenances of splendour and dignity, justly belong. Do you envy that nobleman, whom, if death were in the sound, I would not hesitate to term my honourable patron? and have you any design of dishonouring his remains? It will be a poor victory; nor does it become a knight and nobleman to come in person to enjoy such a triumph over the dead, against whom, when he lived, there were few knights dared spur their horses. He fought in defence of his country, but he had not the good fortune of most of his ancestors, to die on the field of battle. Captivity, sickness, and regret for the misfortunes of his native land brought his head to the grave in his prison-house, in the land of the stranger.'

The old man's voice here became interrupted by emotion, and the English knight found it difficult to continue his examination in the stern fashion which his duty required.

'Old man,' he said, 'I do not require from thee this detail, which must be useless to me, as well as painful to thyself. Thou dost but thy duty in rendering justice to thy ancient lord; but thou hast not yet explained to me why I have met in this town, this very night, and not half an hour since, a person in the arms, and bearing the complexion, of one of the Black Douglasses, who cried his war-cry as if in contempt of his conquerors.'

'Surely,' replied the sexton, 'it is not my business to explain such a fancy, otherwise than by supposing that the natural fears of the Southron will raise the spectre of a Douglas at any time, when he is within sight of their sepulchre. Methinks, in such a night as this, the fairest cavalier would wear the complexion of this swarthy race; nor can I hold it wonderful that the war-cry which was once in the throats of so many thousands in this country should issue upon occasion from the mouth of a single champion.'

'You are bold, old man,' returned the English knight; 'do you consider that your life is in my power, and that it may, in certain cases, be my duty to inflict death with that degree of pain at which humanity shudders?'

The old man rose up slowly in the light of the blazing fire, displaying his emaciated features, which resembled those ascribed by artists to St. Anthony of the desert, and pointing to the feeble lamp, which he placed upon the coarse table, thus addressed his interrogator, with an appearance of perfect firmness, and something even resembling dignity :

‘Young knight of England, you see that utensil constructed for the purpose of dispensing light amidst these fatal vaults ; it is as frail as anything can well be, whose flame is supplied by living element, contained in a frame composed of iron. It is doubtless in your power entirely to end its service, by destroying the frame or extinguishing the light. Threaten it with such annihilation, sir knight, and see whether your menace will impress any sense of fear either on the element or the iron. Know that you have no more power over the frail mortal whom you threaten with similar annihilation. You may tear from my body the skin in which it is now swathed ; but although my nerves might glow with agony during the inhuman operation, it would produce no more impression on me than flaying on the stag which an arrow has previously pierced through the heart. My age sets me beyond your cruelty : if you think otherwise, call your agents, and commence your operations ; neither threats nor inflictions will enable you to extort from me anything that I am not ready to tell you of my own accord.’

‘You trifle with me, old man,’ said De Valence : ‘you talk as if you possessed some secret respecting the motions of these Douglasses, who are to you as gods, yet you communicate no intelligence to me whatever.’

‘You may soon know,’ replied the old man, ‘all that a poor sexton has to communicate ; and it will not increase your knowledge respecting the living, though it may throw some light upon my proper domains, which are those of the dead. The spirits of the deceased Douglasses do not rest in their graves during the dishonour of their monuments and the downfall of their house. That, upon death, the greater part of any line are consigned to the regions of eternal bliss or of never-ending misery religion will not suffer us to believe, and, amidst a race who had so great a share of worldly triumph and prosperity, we must suppose there have existed many who have been justly subjected to the doom of an intermediate space of punishment. You have destroyed the temples which were built by their posterity to propitiate Heaven for the welfare of their souls ;

you have silenced the prayers and stopped the choirs by the mediation of which the piety of children had sought to appease the wrath of Heaven in behalf of their ancestors, subjected to expiatory fires. Can you wonder that the tormented spirits, thus deprived of the relief which had been proposed to them, should not, according to the common phrase, rest in their graves? Can you wonder they should show themselves like discontented loiterers near to the places which, but for the manner in which you have prosecuted your remorseless warfare, might have ere now afforded them rest? Or do you marvel that these fleshless warriors should interrupt your marches, and do what else their airy nature may permit to disturb your councils, and meet as far as they may the hostilities which you make it your boast to carry on, as well against those who are deceased as against any who may yet survive your cruelty?'

'Old man,' replied Aymer de Valence, 'you cannot expect that I am to take for answer a story like this, being a fiction too gross to charm to sleep a schoolboy tormented with the toothache; nevertheless, I thank God that thy doom does not remain in my hands. My squire and two archers shall carry thee captive to the worshipful Sir John de Walton, governor of the castle and valley, that he may deal with thee as seems meet; nor is he a person to believe in your apparitions and ghosts from purgatory. What ho! Fabian! Come hither, and bring with thee two archers of the guard.'

Fabian accordingly, who had waited at the entrance of the ruined building, now found his way, by the light of the old sexton's lamp, and the sound of his master's voice, into the singular apartment of the old man, the strange decorations of which struck the youth with great surprise and some horror.

'Take the two archers with thee, Fabian,' said the knight of Valence, 'and, with their assistance, convey this old man, on horseback or in a litter, to the presence of the worshipful Sir John de Walton. Tell him what we have seen, which thou didst witness as well as I; and tell him that this old sexton, whom I send to be examined by his superior wisdom, seems to know more than he is willing to disclose respecting our ghostly cavalier, though he will give us no account of him, except intimating that he is a spirit of the old Douglasses from purgatory, to which Sir John de Walton will give what faith he pleases. You may say that, for my part, my belief is, either that the sexton is crazed by age, want, and enthusiasm, or that he is connected with some plot which the country people are hatching.

You may also say, that I shall not use much ceremony with the youth under the care of the abbot of St. Bride; there is something suspicious in all the occurrences that are now passing around us.

Fabian promised obedience; and the knight, pulling him aside, gave him an additional caution to behave with attention in this business, seeing he must recollect that neither the judgment of himself nor that of his master was apparently held in very much esteem by the governor, and that it would ill become them to make any mistake in a matter where the safety of the castle was perhaps concerned.

'Fear me not, worshipful sir,' replied the youth; 'I am returning to pure air in the first place, and a good fire in the second, both acceptable exchanges for this dungeon of suffocating vapours and execrable smells. You may trust to my making no delay: a very short time will carry me back to Castle Douglas, even moving with suitable attention to this old man's bones.'

'Use him humanely,' answered the knight. 'And thou, old man, if thou art insensible to threats of personal danger in this matter, remember that, if thou art found paltering with us, thy punishment will perhaps be more severe than any we can inflict upon thy person.'

'Can you administer the torture to the soul?' said the sexton.

'As to thee,' answered the knight, 'we have that power: we will dissolve every monastery or religious establishment held for the souls of these Douglasses, and will only allow the religious people to hold their residence there upon condition of their praying for the soul of King Edward the First of glorious memory, the *malleus Scotorum*; and if the Douglasses are deprived of the ghostly benefit of the prayers and services of such shrines, they may term thy obstinacy the cause.'

'Such a species of vengeance,' answered the old man, in the same bold unsubdued tone which he had hitherto used, 'were more worthy of the infernal fiends than of Christian men.'

The squire raised his hand. The knight interposed. 'Forbear him,' he said, 'Fabian, he is very old, and perhaps insane. And you, sexton, remember that the vengeance threatened is lawfully directed towards a family which have been the obstinate supporters of the excommunicated rebel who murdered the Red Comyn at the High Church in Dumfries.'

So saying, Aymer strode out of the ruins, picking his way

with much difficulty ; took his horse, which he found at the entrance ; repeated a caution to Fabian to conduct himself with prudence ; and, passing on to the south-western gate, gave the strongest injunctions concerning the necessity of keeping a vigilant watch, both by patrols and by sentinels, intimating at the same time that it must have been neglected during the preceding part of the evening. The men murmured an apology, the confusion of which seemed to express that there had existed some occasion for the reprimand.

Sir Aymer then proceeded on his journey to Hazelside, his train diminished by the absence of Fabian and his assistants. After a hasty but not a short journey, the knight alighted at Thomas Dickson's, where he found the detachment from Ayr had arrived before him, and were snugly housed for the night. He sent one of the archers to announce his approach to the abbot of St. Bride and his young guest, intimating at the same time that the archer must keep sight of the latter until he himself arrived at the chapel, which would be instantly.

CHAPTER X

When the nightengale singes the wodes waxes grene,
Lef, and gras, and blosme springeth in April I wene,
And love is to myne herte gone with one speare so kene.
Night and day my blood hyt drynkes, mine herte deth me tene.

MSS. Hail. Quoted by Warton.

SIR AYMER DE VALENCE had no sooner followed his archer to the convent of St. Bride than he summoned the abbot to his presence, who came with the air of a man who loves his ease, and who is suddenly called from the couch where he has consigned himself to a comfortable repose, at the summons of one whom he does not think it safe to disobey, and to whom he would not disguise his sense of peevishness, if he durst.

'It is a late ride,' he said, 'which has brought your worthy honour hither from the castle. May I be informed of the cause, after the arrangement so recently gone into with the governor?'

'It is my hope,' replied the knight, 'that you, father abbot, are not already conscious of it; suspicions are afloat, and I myself have this night seen something to confirm them, that some of the obstinate rebels of this country are again setting afoot dangerous practices, to the peril of the garrison; and I come, father, to see whether, in requital of many favours received from the English monarch, you will not merit his bounty and protection by contributing to the discovery of the designs of his enemies.'

'Assuredly so,' answered Father Jerome, in an agitated voice. 'Most unquestionably my information should stand at your command; that is, if I knew anything the communication of which could be of advantage to you.'

'Father abbot,' replied the English knight, 'although it is rash to make myself responsible for a North Country man in these times, yet I own I do consider you as one who has ever been faithfully subject to the King of England, and I willingly hope that you will still continue so.'

'And a fine encouragement I have!' said the abbot; 'to be called out of my bed at midnight, in this raw weather, to undergo the examination of a knight who is the youngest, perhaps, of his own honourable rank, and who will not tell me the subject of the interrogatories, but detains me on this cold pavement till, according to the opinion of Celsus, the podagra which lurks in my feet may be driven into my stomach, and then good-night to abbacy and examinations from henceforward.'

'Good father,' said the young man, 'the spirit of the times must teach thee patience; recollect that I can feel no pleasure in this duty, and that, if an insurrection should take place, the rebels, who are sufficiently displeased with thee for acknowledging the English monarch, would hang thee from thine own steeple to feed the crows; or that, if thou hast secured thy peace by some private compact with the insurgents, the English governor, who will sooner or later gain the advantage, will not fail to treat thee as a rebel to his sovereign.'

'It may appear to you, my noble son,' answered the abbot, obviously discomposed, 'that I am hung up, in this case, on the horns of the dilemma which you have stated; nevertheless, I protest to you that, if any one accuses me of conspiring with the rebels against the King of England, I am ready, provided you give me time to swallow a potion recommended by Celsus in my perilous case, to answer with the most perfect sincerity every question which you can put to me upon that subject.' So saying, he called upon a monk who had attended at his levée, and, giving him a large key, whispered something in his ear. The cup which the monk brought was of such capacity as proved Celsus's draught required to be administered in considerable quantity, and a strong smell which it spread through the apartment accredited the knight's suspicion that the medicine chiefly consisted of what were then termed distilled waters — a preparation known in the monasteries for some time before that comfortable secret had reached the laity in general. The abbot, neither overawed by the strength nor by the quantity of the potion, took it off with what he himself would have called a feeling of solace and pleasance, and his voice became much more composed; he signified himself as comforted extraordinarily by the medicine, and willing to proceed to answer any questions which could be put to him by his gallant young friend.

'At present,' said the knight, 'you are aware, father, that

strangers travelling through this country must be the first objects of our suspicions and inquiries. What is, for example, your own opinion of the youth termed Augustine, the son, or calling himself so, of a person called Bertram the minstrel, who has resided for some days in your convent ?

The abbot heard the question with eyes expressive of surprise at the quarter from which it came.

‘Assuredly,’ said he, ‘I think of him as a youth who, from anything I have seen, is of that excellent disposition, both with respect to loyalty and religion, which I should have expected, were I to judge from the estimable person who committed him to my care.’

With this the abbot bowed to the knight, as if he had conceived that this repartee gave him a silencing advantage in any question which could follow upon that subject, and he was probably therefore surprised when Sir Aymer replied as follows :—

‘It is very true, father abbot, that I myself did recommend this stripling to you as a youth of a harmless disposition, and with respect to whom it would be unnecessary to exercise the strict vigilance extended to others in similar circumstances ; but the evidence which seemed to me to vouch for this young man’s innocence has not appeared so satisfactory to my superior and commander, and it is by his orders that I now make farther inquiries of you. You must think they are of consequence, since we again trouble you, and at so unwonted an hour.’

‘I can only protest by my order and by the veil of St. Bride,’ replied the abbot, the spirit of Celsus appearing to fail his pupil, ‘that whatever evil may be in this matter is totally unknown to me, nor could it be extorted from me by racks or implements of torture. Whatever signs of disloyalty may have been evinced by this young man, I have witnessed none of them, although I have been strictly attentive to his behaviour.’

‘In what respect ?’ said the knight, ‘and what is the result of your observation ?’

‘My answer,’ said the abbot of St. Bride, ‘shall be sincere and downright. The youth condescended upon payment of a certain number of gold crowns, not by any means to repay the hospitality of the church of St. Bride, but merely——’

‘Nay, father,’ interrupted the knight, ‘you may cut that short, since the governor and I well understand the terms upon which the monks of St. Bride exercise their hospitality.’

In what manner, it is more necessary to ask, was it received by this boy?’

‘With the utmost gentleness and moderation, noble sir,’ answered the abbot. ‘Indeed, it appeared to me at first that he might be a troublesome guest, since the amount of his benevolence to the convent was such as to encourage, and in some degree to authorise, his demanding accommodation of a kind superior to what we had to bestow.’

‘In which case,’ said Sir Aymer, ‘you would have had the discomfort of returning some part of the money you had received?’

‘That,’ replied the abbot, ‘would have been a mode of settlement contrary to our vows. What is paid to the treasury of St. Bridget cannot, agreeably to our rule, be on any account restored. But, noble knight, there was no occasion for this: a crust of white bread and a draught of milk were diet sufficient to nourish this poor youth for a day, and it was my own anxiety for his health that dictated the furnishing of his cell with a softer bed and coverlet than are quite consistent with the rules of our order.’

‘Now hearken to what I say, sir abbot, and answer me truly,’ said the knight of Valence. ‘What communication has this youth held with the inmates of your convent, or with those beyond your house? Search your memory concerning this, and let me have a distinct answer, for your guest’s safety and your own depend upon it.’

‘As I am a Christian man,’ said the abbot, ‘I have observed nothing which could give ground for your worship’s suspicions. The boy Augustine, unlike those whom I have observed who have been educated in the world, showed a marked preference to the company of such sisters as the house of St. Bride contains, rather than for that of the monks, my brethren, although there are among them pleasant and conversible men.’

‘Scandal,’ said the young knight, ‘might find a reason for that preference.’

‘Not in the case of the sisters of St. Bridget,’ said the abbot, ‘most of whom have been either sorely misused by time, or their comeliness destroyed by some mishap previously to their being received into the seclusion of the house.’

This observation the good father made with some internal movement of mirth, which was apparently excited at the idea of the sisterhood of St. Bridget becoming attractive to any one by dint of their personal beauty, in which, as it happened,

they were all notably, and almost ludicrously, deficient. The English knight, to whom the sisterhood were well known, felt also inclined to smile at this conversation.

'I acquit,' he said, 'the pious sisterhood of charming, otherwise than by their kind wishes and attention to the wants of the suffering stranger.'

'Sister Beatrice,' continued the father, resuming his gravity, 'is indeed blessed with a winning gift of making comfits and syllabubs; but, on minute inquiry, I do not find that the youth has tasted any of them. Neither is sister Ursula so hard-favoured by nature as from the effects of an accident; but your honour knows that, when a woman is ugly, the men do not trouble themselves about the cause of her hard favour. I will go, with your leave, and see in what state the youth now is, and summon him before you.'

'I request you to do so, father, for the affair is instant; and I earnestly advise you to watch, in the closest manner, this Augustine's behaviour: you cannot be too particular. I will wait your return, and either carry the boy to the castle, or leave him here, as circumstances may seem to require.'

The abbot bowed, promised his utmost exertions, and hobbled out of the room to wait on the youth Augustine in his cell, anxious to favour, if possible, the wishes of De Valence, whom he looked upon as rendered by circumstances his military patron.

He remained long absent, and Sir Aymer began to be of opinion that the delay was suspicious, when the abbot returned with perplexity and discomposure in his countenance.

'I crave your pardon for keeping your worship waiting,' said Jerome, with much anxiety; 'but I have myself been detained and vexed by unnecessary formalities and scruples on the part of this peevish boy. In the first place, hearing my foot approaching his bedroom, my youth, instead of undoing the door, which would have been but proper respect to my place, on the contrary draws a strong bolt on the inside; and this fastening, forsooth, has been placed on his chamber by Ursula's command, that his slumbers might be suitably respected. I intimated to him as I best could that he must attend you without delay, and prepare to accompany you to the Castle of Douglas; but he would not answer a single word, save recommending to me patience, to which I was fain to have recourse, as well as your archer, whom I found standing sentinel before the door of the cell, and contenting himself

with the assurance of the sisters that there was no other passage by which Augustine could make his escape. At length the door opens, and my young master presents himself fully arrayed for his journey. The truth is, I think some fresh attack of his malady has affected the youth: he may perhaps be disturbed with some touch of hypochondria or black choler—a species of dotage of the mind which is sometimes found concomitant with and symptomatic of this disorder; but he is at present composed, and if your worship chooses to see him, he is at your command.’

‘Call him hither,’ said the knight. And a considerable space of time again elapsed ere the eloquence of the abbot, half chiding and half soothing, prevailed on the lady, in her adopted character, to approach the parlour, in which at last she made her appearance, with a countenance on which the marks of tears might still be discovered, and a pettish sullenness, like that of a boy, or, with reverence, that of a girl, who is determined upon taking her own way in any matter, and equally resolved to give no reason for her doing so. Her hurried levée had not prevented her attending closely to all the muffings and disguisings by which her pilgrim’s dress was arranged, so as to alter her appearance, and effectually disguise her sex. But as civility prevented her wearing her large slouched hat, she necessarily exposed her countenance more than in the open air; and though the knight beheld a most lovely set of features, yet they were not such as were inconsistent with the character she had adopted, and which she had resolved upon maintaining to the last. She had, accordingly, mustered up a degree of courage which was not natural to her, and which she perhaps supported by hopes which her situation hardly admitted. So soon as she found herself in the same apartment with De Valence, she assumed a style of manners bolder and more determined than she had hitherto displayed.

‘Your worship,’ she said, addressing him even before he spoke, ‘is a knight of England, and possessed, doubtless, of the virtues which become that noble station. I am an unfortunate lad, obliged, by reasons which I am under the necessity of keeping secret, to travel in a dangerous country, where I am suspected, without any just cause, of becoming accessory to plots and conspiracies which are contrary to my own interest, and which my very soul abhors, and which I might safely abjure, by imprecating upon myself all the curses of our religion and renouncing all its promises, if I were accessory to

such designs in thought, word, or deed. Nevertheless, you, who will not believe my solemn protestations, are about to proceed against me as a guilty person, and in so doing I must warn you, sir knight, that you will commit a great and cruel injustice.

'I shall endeavour to avoid that,' said the knight, 'by referring the duty to Sir John de Walton, the governor, who will decide what is to be done; in this case, my only duty will be to place you in his hands at Douglas Castle.'

'Must you do this?' said Augustine.

'Certainly,' replied the knight, 'or be answerable for neglecting my duty.'

'But if I become bound to answer your loss with a large sum of money, a large tract of land——'

'No treasure, no land, supposing such at your disposal,' answered the knight, 'can atone for disgrace; and besides, boy, how should I trust to your warrant, were my avarice such as would induce me to listen to such proposals?'

'I must then prepare to attend you instantly to the Castle of Douglas and the presence of Sir John de Walton?' replied Augustine.

'Young man,' answered De Valence, 'there is no remedy, since, if you delay me longer, I must carry you thither by force.'

'What will be the consequence to my father?' said the youth.

'That,' replied the knight, 'will depend exactly on the nature of your confession and his; something you both have to say, as is evident from the terms of the letter Sir John de Walton conveyed to you; and I assure you, you were better to speak it out at once than to risk the consequences of more delay. I can admit of no more trifling; and, believe me, that your fate will be entirely ruled by your own frankness and candour.'

'I must prepare, then, to travel at your command,' said the youth. 'But this cruel disease still hangs around me, and Abbot Jerome, whose leechcraft is famous, will himself assure you that I cannot travel without danger of my life; and that, while I was residing in this convent, I declined every opportunity of exercise which was offered me by the kindness of the garrison at Hazelside, lest I might by mishap bring the contagion among your men.'

'The youth says right,' said the abbot: 'the archers and men-at-arms have more than once sent to invite this lad to join

in some of their military games, or to amuse them, perhaps, with some of his minstrelsy ; but he has uniformly declined doing so ; and, according to my belief, it is the effects of this disorder which have prevented his accepting an indulgence so natural to his age, and in so dull a place as the convent of St. Bride must needs seem to a youth bred up in the world.'

'Do you then hold, reverend father,' said Sir Aymer, 'that there is real danger in carrying this youth to the castle to-night, as I proposed ?'

'I conceive such danger,' replied the abbot, 'to exist, not only as it may occasion the relapse of the poor youth himself, but as particularly likely, no preparations having been made, to introduce the infection among your honourable garrison ; for it is in these relapses, more than in the first violence of the malady, that it has been found most contagious.'

'Then,' said the knight, 'you must be content, my friend, to give a share of your room to an archer, by way of sentinel.'

'I cannot object,' said Augustine, 'provided my unfortunate vicinity does not endanger the health of the poor soldier.'

'He will be as ready to do his duty,' said the abbot, 'without the door of the apartment as within it ; and if the youth should sleep soundly, which the presence of a guard in his chamber might prevent, he is the more likely to answer your purpose on the morrow.'

'Let it be so,' said Sir Aymer, 'so you are sure that you do not minister any facility of escape.'

'The apartment,' said the monk, 'hath no other entrance than that which is guarded by the archer ; but to content you I shall secure the door in your presence.'

'So be it, then,' said the knight of Valence ; 'this done, I myself will lie down without doffing my mail-shirt, and snatch a sleep till the ruddy dawn calls me again to duty, when you, Augustine, will hold yourself ready to attend me to our Castle of Douglas.'

The bells of the convent summoned the inhabitants and inmates of St. Bride to morning prayers at the first peep of day. When this duty was over, the knight demanded his prisoner. The abbot marshalled him to the door of Augustine's chamber. The sentinel who was stationed there, armed with a brown-bill, or species of partizan, reported that he had heard no motion in the apartment during the whole night. The abbot tapped at the door, but received no answer. He knocked again louder, but the silence was unbroken from within.

'What means this?' said the reverend ruler of the convent of St. Bride; 'my young patient has certainly fallen into a syncope or swoon!'

'I wish, father abbot,' said the knight, 'that he may not have made his escape instead — an accident which both you and I may be required to answer, since, according to our strict duty, we ought to have kept sight of him, and detained him in close custody until daybreak.'

'I trust your worship,' said the abbot, 'only anticipates a misfortune which I cannot think possible.'

'We shall speedily see,' said the knight; and, raising his voice, he called aloud, so as to be heard within, 'Bring crow-bars and levers, and burst me that door into splinters without an instant's delay!'

The loudness of his voice, and the stern tone in which he spoke, soon brought around him the brethren of the house, and two or three soldiers of his own party, who were already busy in caparisoning their horses. The displeasure of the young knight was manifested by his flushed features and the abrupt manner in which he again repeated his commands for breaking open the door. This was speedily performed, though it required the application of considerable strength, and as the shattered remains fell crashing into the apartment, De Valence sprung, and the abbot hobbled, into the cell of the prisoner, which, to the fulfilment of their worst suspicions, they found empty.

CHAPTER XI

Where is he ? Has the deep earth swallow'd him ?
Or hath he melted like some airy phantom
That shuns the approach of morn and the young sun ?
Or hath he wrapt him in Cimmerian darkness,
And pass'd beyond the circuit of the sight
With things of the night's shadows ?

Anonymous.

THE disappearance of the youth, whose disguise and whose fate have, we hope, inclined our readers to take some interest in him, will require some explanation ere we proceed with the other personages of the story, and we shall set about giving it accordingly.

When Augustine was consigned to his cell for the second time on the preceding evening, both the monk and the young knight of Valence had seen the key turned upon him, and had heard him secure the door on the inside with the bolt which had been put on at his request by Sister Ursula, in whose affections the youth of Augustine, his extreme handsomeness, and, above all, his indisposition of body and his melancholy of mind, had gained him considerable interest.

So soon, accordingly, as Augustine re-entered his apartment, he was greeted in a whisper by the sister, who, during the interval of his absence, had contrived to slip into the cell, and having tapped herself behind the little bed, came out, with great appearance of joy, to greet the return of the youth. The number of little attentions, the disposal of holly boughs and such other evergreens as the season permitted, showed the anxiety of the holy sisters to decorate the chamber of their guest, and the greetings of Sister Ursula expressed the same friendly interest, at the same time intimating that she was already in some degree in possession of the stranger's mystery.

As Augustine and the holy sister were busied in exchange of confidence, the extraordinary difference between their counte-

nances and their persons must have struck any one who might have been accidentally a witness of their interview. The dark pilgrim's robe of the disguised female was not a stronger contrast to the white woollen garment worn by the votaress of St. Bride than the visage of the nun, seamed with many a ghastly scar, and the light of one of her eyes extinguished for ever, causing it to roll a sightless luminary in her head, was to the beautiful countenance of Augustine, now bent with a confidential, and even affectionate, look upon the extraordinary features of her companion.

'You know,' said the supposed Augustine, 'the principal part of my story; can you, or will you, lend me your assistance? If not, my dearest sister, you must consent to witness my death, rather than my shame. Yes, Sister Ursula, I will not be pointed at by the finger of scorn, as the thoughtless maiden who sacrificed so much for a young man of whose attachment she was not so well assured as she ought to have been. I will not be dragged before De Walton, for the purpose of being compelled, by threats of torture, to declare myself the female in honour of whom he holds the Dangerous Castle. No doubt he might be glad to give his hand in wedlock to a damsel whose dowry is so ample; but who can tell whether he will regard me with that respect which every woman would wish to command, or pardon that boldness of which I have been guilty, even though its consequences have been in his own favour?'

'Nay, my darling daughter,' answered the nun, 'comfort yourself; for in all I can aid you, be assured I will. My means are somewhat more than my present situation may express, and be assured they shall be tried to the uttermost. Methinks I still hear that lay which you sung to the other sisters and myself, although I alone, touched by feelings kindred to yours, had the address to comprehend that it told your own tale.'

'I am yet surprised,' said Augustine, speaking beneath her breath, 'how I had the boldness to sing in your ears the lay, which, in fact, was the history of my disgrace.'

'Alas! that you will say so,' returned the nun; 'there was not a word but what resembled those tales of love and of high-spirited daring which the best minstrels love to celebrate, and the noblest knights and maidens weep at once and smile to hear! The Lady Augusta of Berkely, a great heiress, according to the world, both in land and movable goods, becomes the king's ward by the death of her parents; and thus is on the point of being given away in marriage to a minion of the King

of England, whom in these Scottish valleys we scruple not to call a peremptory tyrant.'

'I must not say so, my sister,' said the pilgrim; 'and yet, true it is that the cousin of the obscure parasite Gaveston, on whom the King wished to confer my poor hand, was neither by birth, merit, nor circumstance worthy of such an alliance. Meantime I heard of the fame of Sir John de Walton; and I heard of it not with the less interest that his feats of chivalry were said to adorn a knight who, rich in everything else, was poor in worldly goods and in the smiles of fortune. I saw this Sir John de Walton, and I acknowledge that a thought, which had already intruded itself on my imagination, became after this interview, by frequent recurrence, more familiar and more welcome to me. Methought that the daughter of a powerful English family, if she could give away with her hand such wealth as the world spoke of, would more justly and honourably bestow it in remedying the errors of fortune in regard to a gallant knight like De Walton than in patching the revenues of a beggarly Frenchman, whose only merit was in being the kinsman of a man who was very generally detested by the whole kingdom of England, excepting the infatuated monarch himself.'

'Nobly designed, my daughter,' said the nun; 'what more worthy of a noble heart, possessing riches, beauty, birth, and rank, than to confer them all upon indigent and chivalrous merit?'

'Such, dearest sister, was my intention,' replied Augustine; 'but I have, perhaps, scarce sufficiently explained the manner in which I meant to proceed. By the advice of a minstrel of our house, the same who is now prisoner at Douglas, I caused exhibit a large feast upon Christmas eve, and sent invitations abroad to the young knights of noble name who were known to spend their leisure in quest of arms and adventures. When the tables were drawn and the feast concluded, Bertram, as had been before devised, was called upon to take his harp. He sung, receiving from all who were present the attention due to a minstrel of so much fame. The theme which he chose was the frequent capture of this Douglas Castle, or, as the poet termed it, Castle Dangerous. "Where are the champions of the renowned Edward the First," said the minstrel, "when the realm of England cannot furnish a man brave enough, or sufficiently expert in the wars, to defend a miserable hamlet of the North against the Scottish rebels, who have vowed to retake it

over our soldiers' heads ere the year rolls to an end? Where are the noble ladies whose smiles used to give countenance to the knights of St. George's cross? Alas! the spirit of love and of chivalry is alike dead amongst us: our knights are limited to petty enterprises, and our noblest heiresses are given as prizes to strangers, as if their own country had no one to deserve them." Here stopt the harp; and I shame to say that I myself, as if moved to enthusiasm by the song of the minstrel, arose, and taking from my neck the chain of gold which supported a crucifix of special sanctity, I made my vow, always under the King's permission, that I would give my hand, and the inheritance of my fathers, to the good knight, being of noble birth and lineage, who should keep the Castle of Douglas in the King of England's name for a year and a day. I sat down, my dearest sister, deafened with the jubilee in which my guests expressed their applause of my supposed patriotism. Yet some degree of pause took place amidst the young knights, who might reasonably have been supposed ready to embrace this offer, although at the risk of being encumbered with Augusta of Berkely.'

'Shame on the man,' said Sister Ursula, 'who should think so! Put your beauty alone, my dearest, into consideration, and a true knight ought to have embraced the dangers of twenty Castles of Douglas, rather than let such an invaluable opportunity of gaining your favour be lost.'

'It may be that some in reality thought so,' said the pilgrim; 'but it was supposed that the King's favour might be lost by those who seemed too anxious to thwart his royal purpose upon his ward's hand. At any rate, greatly to my joy, the only person who availed himself of the offer I had made was Sir John de Walton; and as his acceptance of it was guarded by a clause, saving and reserving the King's approbation, I hope he has not suffered any diminution of Edward's favour.'

'Assure yourself, noble and high-spirited young lady,' replied the nun, 'that there is no fear of thy generous devotion hurting thy lover with the King of England. Something we hear concerning worldly passages, even in this remote nook of St. Bride's cloister, and the report goes among the English soldiers that their king was indeed offended at your putting your will in opposition to his own; yet, on the other hand, this preferred lover, Sir John de Walton, was a man of such extensive fame, and your offer was so much in the character

of better but not forgotten times, that even a king could not at the beginning of a long and stubborn war deprive an errant cavalier of his bride, if she should be duly won by his sword and lance.'

'Ah! dearest Sister Ursula!' sighed the disguised pilgrim, 'but, on the other hand, how much time must pass by in the siege by defeating which that suit must needs be advanced? While I sat in my lonely castle, tidings after tidings came to astound me with the numerous, or rather the constant, dangers with which my lover was surrounded, until at length, in a moment I think of madness, I resolved to set out in this masculine disguise; and having myself with my own eyes seen in what situation I had placed my knight, I determined to take such measures in respect to shortening the term of his trial, or otherwise, as a sight of Douglas Castle, and — why should I deny it? — of Sir John de Walton, might suggest. Perhaps you, my dearest sister, may not so well understand my being tempted into flinching from the resolution which I had laid down for my own honour and that of my lover; but consider that my resolution was the consequence of a moment of excitation, and that the course which I adopted was the conclusion of a long, wasting, sickening state of uncertainty, the effect of which was to weaken the nerves which were once highly strung with love of my country, as I thought; but in reality, alas! with fond and anxious feelings of a more selfish description.'

'Alas!' said Sister Ursula, evincing the strongest symptoms of interest and compassion, 'am I the person, dearest child, whom you suspect of insensibility to the distresses which are the fruit of true love? Do you suppose that the air which is breathed within these walls has the property, upon the female heart, of such marvellous fountains as they say change into stone the substances which are immersed into their waters? Hear my tale, and judge if it can be thus with one who possesses my causes of grief. And do not fear for loss of time: we must let our neighbours at Hazelside be settled for the evening ere I furnish you with the means of escape; and you must have a trusty guide, for whose fidelity I will be responsible, to direct your path through these woods, and protect you in case of any danger, too likely to occur in these troublesome times. It will thus be nigh an hour ere you depart; and sure I am that in no manner can you spend the time better than in listening to distresses too similar to your own, and

flowing from the source of disappointed affection which you must needs sympathise with.'

The distresses of the Lady Augusta did not prevent her being in some degree affected almost ludicrously with the singular contrast between the hideous countenance of this victim of the tender passion and the cause to which she imputed her sorrows; but it was not a moment for giving way to a sense of the ridiculous, which would have been in the highest degree offensive to the sister of St. Bride, whose goodwill she had so many reasons to conciliate. She readily, therefore, succeeded in preparing herself to listen to the votary with an appearance of sympathy, which might reward that which she had herself experienced at the hands of Sister Ursula; while the unfortunate recluse, with an agitation which made her ugliness still more conspicuous, narrated, nearly in a whisper, the following circumstances:—

'My misfortunes commenced long before I was called Sister Ursula, or secluded as a votaress within these walls. My father was a noble Norman, who, like many of his countrymen, sought and found fortune at the court of the King of Scotland. He was endowed with the sheriffdom of this county, and Maurice de Hattely, or Hautlieu, was numbered among the wealthy and powerful barons of Scotland. Wherefore should I deny it, that the daughter of this baron, then called Margaret de Hautlieu, was also distinguished among the great and fair of the land? It can be no censurable vanity which provokes me to speak the truth, and unless I tell it myself, you could hardly suspect what a resemblance I once bore even to the lovely Lady Augusta of Berkely. About this time broke out those unfortunate feuds of Bruce and Baliol which have been so long the curse of this country. My father, determined in his choice of party by the arguments of his wealthy kinsman at the court of Edward, embraced with passion the faction of the English interest, and became one of the keenest partizans, at first of John Baliol, and afterwards of the English monarch. None among the Anglicised Scottish, as his party was called, were so zealous as he for the red cross, and no one was more detested by his countrymen who followed the national standard St. Andrew and the patriot Wallace. Among those soldiers of the soil, Malcolm Fleming of Biggar was one of the most highly valued by his noble birth, his high acquirements, and this preference in chivalry. I saw him; and the ghastly spectre of extensive famines you must not be ashamed to say that she

loved, and was beloved by, one of the handsomest youths in Scotland. Our attachment was discovered to my father almost ere we had owned it to each other, and he was furious both against my lover and myself; he placed me under the charge of a religious woman of this rule, and I was immured within the house of St. Bride, where my father shamed not to announce he would cause me to take the veil by force, unless I agreed to wed a youth bred at the English court, his nephew; and, as Heaven had granted him no son, the heir, as he had resolved, of the house of Hautlieu. I was not long in making my election. I protested that death should be my choice, rather than any other husband excepting Malcolm Fleming. Neither was my lover less faithful: he found means to communicate to me a particular night on which he proposed to attempt to storm the nunnery of St. Bride, and carry me from hence to freedom and the greenwood, of which Wallace was generally called the king. In an evil hour—an hour, I think, of infatuation and witchery—I suffered the abbess to wheedle the secret out of me, which I might have been sensible would appear more horribly flagitious to her than to any other woman that breathed; but I had not taken the vows, and I thought Wallace and Fleming had the same charms for everybody as for me, and the artful woman gave me reason to believe that her loyalty to Bruce was without a flaw of suspicion, and she took part in a plot of which my freedom was the object. The abbess engaged to have the English guards removed to a distance, and in appearance the troops were withdrawn. Accordingly, in the middle of the night appointed, the window of my cell, which was two stories from the ground, was opened without noise; and never were my eyes more gladdened than, as ready disguised and arrayed for flight, even in a horseman's dress, like yourself, fairest Lady Augusta, I saw Malcolm Fleming spring into the apartment. He rushed towards me; but at the same time my father with ten of his strongest men filled the room, and cried their war-cry of "Balliol." Blows were instantly dealt on every side. A form like a giant, however, appeared in the midst of the tumult, and distinguished himself, even to my half-giddy eye, by the ease with which he bore down and dispersed those who fought against our freedom. My father alone offered an opposition which threatened to prove fatal to him; for Wallace, it was said, could foil any two martial champions that ever drew sword. Brushing from him the armed men, as a lady would drive

away with her fan a swarm of troublesome flies, he secured me in one arm, used his other for our mutual protection, and I found myself in the act of being borne in safety down the ladder by which my deliverers had ascended from without ; but an evil fate awaited this attempt.

‘My father, whom the Champion of Scotland had spared for my sake, or rather for Fleming’s, gained by his victor’s compassion and lenity a fearful advantage, and made a remorseless use of it. Having only his left hand to oppose to the maniac attempts of my father, even the strength of Wallace could not prevent the assailant, with all the energy of desperation, from throwing down the ladder, on which his daughter was perched like a dove in the grasp of an eagle. The Champion saw our danger, and, exerting his inimitable strength and agility, cleared himself and me from the ladder, and leaped free of the moat of the convent, into which we must otherwise have been precipitated. The Champion of Scotland was saved in the desperate attempt, but I, who fell among a heap of stones and rubbish — I, the disobedient daughter, wellnigh the apostate vestal — waked only from a long bed of sickness to find myself the disfigured wretch which you now see me. I then learned that Malcolm had escaped from the fray, and shortly after I heard, with feelings less keen, perhaps, than they ought to have been, that my father was slain in one of the endless battles which took place between the contending factions. If he had lived, I might have submitted to the completion of my fate ; but since he was no more, I felt that it would be a preferable lot to be a beggar in the streets of a Scottish village than an abbess in this miserable house of St. Bride ; nor was even that poor object of ambition, on which my father used to expatiate when desirous of persuading me to enter the monastic state, by milder means than throwing me off the battlements, long open to me. The old abbess died of a cold caught the evening of the fray ; and the place, which might have been kept open until I was capable of filling it, was disposed of otherwise, when the English thought fit to reform, as they termed it, the discipline of the house ; and, instead of electing a new abbess, sent hither two or three friendly monks, who have now the absolute government of the community, and wield it entirely according to the pleasure of the English. But I, for one, who have had the honour to be supported by the arms of the Champion of my country, will not remain here to be commanded by this Abbot Jerome. I will go forth, nor do I fear

to find relations and friends who will provide a more fitting place of refuge for Margaret de Hautlieu than the convent of St. Bride ; you, too, dearest lady, shall obtain your freedom, and it will be well to leave such information as will make Sir John de Walton aware of the devotion with which his happy fate has inspired you.'

'It is not, then, your own intention,' said the Lady Augusta, 'to return into the world again, and you are about to renounce the lover in a union with whom you and he once saw your joint happiness?'

'It is a question, my dearest child,' said Sister Ursula, 'which I dare not ask myself, and to which I am absolutely uncertain what answer I should return. I have not taken the final and irrevocable vows : I have done nothing to alter my situation with regard to Malcolm Fleming. He also, by the vows plighted in the chancery of Heaven, is my affianced bridegroom, nor am I conscious that I less deserve his faith in any respect now than at the moment when it was pledged to me ; but I confess, dearest lady, that rumours have reached me which sting me to the quick : the reports of my wounds and scars are said to have estranged the knight of my choice. I am now indeed poor,' she added, with a sigh, 'and I am no longer possessed of those personal charms which they say attract the love and fix the fidelity of the other sex. I teach myself, therefore, to think, in my moments of settled resolution, that all betwixt me and Malcolm Fleming is at an end, saving good wishes on the part of both towards the other ; and yet there is a sensation in my bosom which whispers, in spite of my reason, that, if I absolutely believed that which I now say, there would be no object on earth worthy my living for in order to attain it. This insinuating prepossession whispers to my secret soul, and in very opposition to my reason and understanding, that Malcolm Fleming, who could pledge his all upon the service of his country, is incapable of nourishing the versatile affection of an ordinary, a coarse, or a venal character. Methinks, were the difference upon his part instead of mine, he would not lose his interest in my eyes because he was seamed with honourable scars, obtained in asserting the freedom of his choice, but that such wounds would, in my opinion, add to his merit, whatever they took away from his personal comeliness. Ideas rise on my soul, as if Malcolm and Margaret might yet be to each other all that their affections once anticipated with so much security, and that a change which

took nothing from the honour and virtue of the beloved person must rather add to than diminish the charms of the union. Look at me, dearest Lady Augusta — look me, if you have courage, full in the face, and tell me whether I do not rave when my fancy is thus converting mere possibilities into that which is natural and probable.’

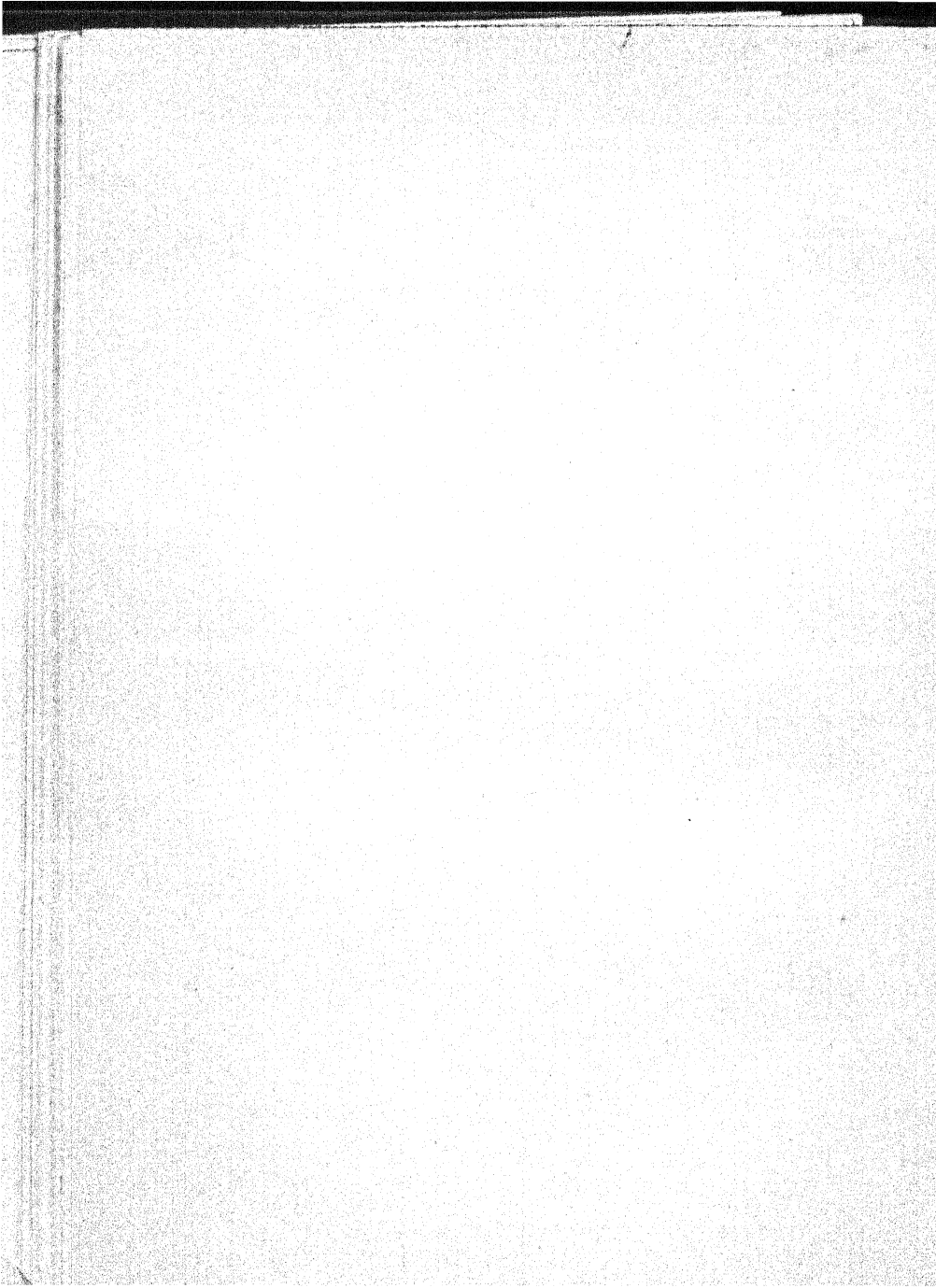
The Lady of Berkely, conscious of the necessity, raised her eyes on the unfortunate nun, afraid of losing her own chance of deliverance by the mode in which she should conduct herself in this crisis, yet not willing at the same time to flatter the unfortunate Ursula with suggesting ideas for which her own sense told her she could hardly find any rational grounds. But her imagination, stored with the minstrelsy of the time, brought back to her recollection the Loathly Lady in *The Marriage of Sir Gawain*, and she conducted her reply in the following manner : —

‘You ask me, my dear Lady Margaret, a trying question, which it would be unfriendly to answer otherwise than sincerely, and most cruel to answer with too much rashness. It is true, that what is called beauty is the first quality on which we of the weaker sex learn to set a value : we are flattered by the imputation of personal charms, whether we actually possess them or not ; and no doubt we learn to place upon them a great deal more consequence than in reality is found to belong to them. Women, however, even such as are held by their own sex, and perhaps in secret by themselves, as devoid of all pretensions to beauty, have been known to become, from their understanding, their talents, or their accomplishments, the undoubted objects of the warmest attachment. Wherefore, then, should you, in the mere rashness of your apprehension, deem it impossible that your Malcolm Fleming should be made of that porcelain clay of the earth which despises the passing captivations of outward form, in comparison to the charms of true affection and the excellence of talents and virtue ?’

The nun pressed her companion’s hand to her bosom, and answered her with a deep sigh.

‘I fear,’ she said, ‘you flatter me ; and yet, in a crisis like this, it does one good to be flattered, even as cordials, otherwise dangerous to the constitution, are wisely given to support a patient through a paroxysm of agony, and enable him to endure at least what they cannot cure. Answer only one question, and it will be time we drop this conversation. Could you, sweet lady — you upon whom fortune has bestowed so many charms —





could any argument make you patient under the irretrievable loss of your personal advantages, with the concomitant loss, as in my case is most probable, of that lover for whom you have already done so much ?'

The English lady cast her eyes again on her friend, and could not help shuddering a little at the thought of her own beautiful countenance being exchanged for the seamed and scarred features of the Lady of Hautlieu, irregularly lighted by the beams of a single eye.

'Believe me,' she said, looking solemnly upwards, 'that, even in the case which you suppose, I would not sorrow so much for myself as I would for the poor-spirited thoughts of the lover who could leave me because those transitory charms — which must in any case ere long take their departure — had fled ere yet the bridal day. It is, however, concealed by the decrees of Providence in what manner, or to what extent, other persons, with whose disposition we are not fully acquainted, may be affected by such changes. I can only assure you that my hopes go with yours, and that there is no difficulty which shall remain in your path in future, if it is in my power to remove it. Hark !'

'It is the signal of our freedom,' replied Ursula, giving attention to something resembling the whoop of the night-owl. 'We must prepare to leave the convent in a few minutes. Have you anything to take with you ?'

'Nothing,' answered the Lady of Berkely, 'except the few valuables, which I scarce know why I brought with me on my flight hither. This scroll, which I shall leave behind, gives my faithful minstrel permission to save himself, by confessing to Sir John de Walton who the person really is whom he has had within his reach.'

'It is strange,' said the novice of St. Bride, 'through what extraordinary labyrinths this Love, this will-of-the-wisp, guides his votaries. Take heed as you descend ; this trap-door, carefully concealed, curiously jointed and oiled, leads to a secret postern, where I conceive the horses ailed wait, which will enable us speedily to bid adieu to St. Bride's — Heaven's blessing on her and on her convent ! We can have no advantage from any light until we are in the open air.'

During this time, Sister Ursula, to give her for the last time her conventual name, exchanged her stole, or loose upper garment, for the more succinct cloak and hood of a horseman. She led the way through divers passages, studiously complicated,

until the Lady of Berkely, with throbbing heart, stood in the pale and doubtful moonlight, which was shining with grey uncertainty upon the walls of the ancient building. The imitation of an owl's cry directed them to a neighbouring large elm, and on approaching it they were aware of three horses, held by one concerning whom they could only see that he was tall, strong, and accoutred in the dress of a man-at-arms.

'The sooner,' he said, 'we are gone from this place, Lady Margaret, it is so much the better. You have only to direct the course which we shall hold.'

Lady Margaret's answer was given beneath her breath; and replied to with a caution from the guide to ride slowly and silently for the first quarter of an hour, by which time inhabited places would be left at a distance.

CHAPTER XII

GR^EAT was the astonishment of the young knight of Valence and the reverend Father Jerome, when, upon breaking into the cell, they discovered the youthful pilgrim's absence; and, from the garments which were left, saw every reason to think that the one-eyed novice, Sister Ursula, had accompanied him in his escape from custody. A thousand thoughts thronged upon Sir Aymer, how shamefully he had suffered himself to be outwitted by the artifices of a boy and of a novice. His reverend companion in error felt no less contrition for having recommended to the knight a mild exercise of his authority. Father Jerome had obtained his preferment as abbot upon the faith of his zeal for the cause of the English monarch, with the affected interest in which he was at a loss to reconcile his proceedings of the last night. A hurried inquiry took place, from which little could be learned, save that the young pilgrim had most certainly gone off with the Lady Margaret de Hautlieu — an incident at which the females of the convent expressed surprise, mingled with a great deal of horror; while that of the males, whom the news soon reached, was qualified with a degree of wonder, which seemed to be founded upon the very different personal appearance of the two fugitives.

'Sacred Virgin,' said a nun, 'who could have conceived the hopeful votaress, Sister Ursula, so lately drowned in tears for her father's untimely fate, capable of eloping with a boy scarce fourteen years old?'

'And, holy St. Bride!' said the Abbot Jerome, 'what could have made so handsome a young man lend his arm to assist such a nightmare as Sister Ursula in the commission of so great an enormity? Certainly he can neither plead temptation nor seduction, but must have gone, as the worldly phrase is, to the devil with a dish-clout.'

'I must divide the soldiers to pursue the fugitives,' said

De Valence, 'unless this letter, which the pilgrim must have left behind him, shall contain some explanations respecting our mysterious prisoner.'

After viewing the contents with some surprise, he read aloud — 'The undersigned, late residing in the house of St. Bride, do you, Father Jerome, the abbot of said house, to know that, finding you were disposed to treat me as a prisoner and a spy, in the sanctuary to which you had received me as a distressed person, I have resolved to use my natural liberty, with which you have no right to interfere, and therefore have withdrawn myself from your abbacy. Moreover, finding that the novice called in your convent Sister Ursula — who hath, by monastic rule and discipline, a fair title to return to the world unless she is pleased, after a year's noviciate, to profess herself sister of your order — is determined to use such privilege, I joyfully take the opportunity of her company in this her lawful resolution, as being what is in conformity to the law of God, and the precepts of St. Bride, which gave you no authority to detain any person in your convent by force, who hath not taken upon her irrevocably the vows of the order.

'To you, Sir John de Walton, and Sir Aymer de Valence, knights of England, commanding the garrison of Douglas Dale, I have only to say, that you have acted and are acting against me under a mystery, the solution of which is comprehended in a secret known only to my faithful minstrel, Bertram of the many Lays, as whose son I have found it convenient to pass myself. But, as I cannot at this time prevail upon myself personally to discover a secret which cannot well be unfolded without feelings of shame, I not only give permission to the said Bertram the minstrel, but I charge and command him, that he tell to you the purpose with which I came originally to the Castle of Douglas. When this is discovered, it will only remain to express my feelings towards the two knights, in return for the pain and agony of mind which their violence and threats of further severities have occasioned me.

'And first, respecting Sir Aymer de Valence, I freely and willingly forgive him for having been involved in a mistake to which I myself led the way, and I shall at all times be happy to meet with him as an acquaintance, and never to think farther of his part in these few days' history, saving as matter of mirth and ridicule.

'But respecting Sir John de Walton, I must request of him to consider whether his conduct towards me, standing as we at

present do towards each other, is such as he himself ought to forget, or I ought to forgive; and I trust he will understand me when I tell him that all former connexions must henceforth be at an end between him and the supposed

‘AUGUSTINE.’

‘This is madness,’ said the abbot, when he had read the letter — ‘very midsummer madness, not unfrequently an accompaniment of this pestilential disease, and I should do well in requiring of those soldiers who shall first apprehend this youth Augustine, that they reduce his victuals immediately to water and bread, taking care that the diet do not exceed in measure what is necessary to sustain nature; nay, I should be warranted by the learned, did I recommend a sufficient intermixture of flagellation with belts, stirrup-leathers, or surcingles, and failing those, with riding-whips, switches, and the like.’

‘Hush! my reverend father,’ said De Valence, ‘a light begins to break in upon me. John de Walton, if my suspicion be true, would sooner expose his own flesh to be hewn from his bones than have this Augustine’s finger stung by a gnat. Instead of treating this youth as a madman, I, for my own part, will be contented to avow that I myself have been bewitched and fascinated; and by my honour, if I send out my attendants in quest of the fugitives, it shall be with the strict charge that, when apprehended, they treat them with all respect, and protect them, if they object to return to this house, to any honourable place of refuge which they may desire.’

‘I hope,’ said the abbot, looking strangely confused, ‘I shall be first heard in behalf of the church concerning this affair of an abducted nun? You see yourself, sir knight, that this scapegrace of a minstrel avouches neither repentance nor contrition at his share in a matter so flagitious.’

‘You shall be secured an opportunity of being fully heard,’ replied the knight, ‘if you shall find at last that you really desire one. Meantime, I must back, without a moment’s delay, to inform Sir John de Walton of the turn which affairs have taken. Farewell, reverend father. By my honour, we may wish each other joy that we have escaped from a troublesome charge, which brought as much terror with it as the phantoms of a fearful dream, and is yet found capable of being dispelled by a cure as simple as that of awakening the sleeper. But, by St. Bride! both churchmen and laymen are bound to sympathise with the unfortunate Sir John de Walton. I tell thee,

father, that if this letter' — touching the missive with his finger — 'is to be construed literally, as far as respects him, he is the man most to be pitied betwixt the brink of Solway and the place where we now stand. Suspend thy curiosity, most worthy churchman, lest there should be more in this matter than I myself see; so that, while thinking that I have lighted on the true explanation, I may not have to acknowledge that I have been again leading you into error. Sound to horse there! Ho!' he called out from the window of the apartment; 'and let the party I brought hither prepare to scour the woods on their return.'

'By my faith!' said Father Jerome, 'I am right glad that this young nutcracker is going to leave me to my own meditation. I hate when a young person pretends to understand whatever passes, while his betters are obliged to confess that it is all a mystery to them. Such an assumption is like that of the conceited fool, Sister Ursula, who pretended to read with a single eye a manuscript which I myself could not find intelligible with the assistance of my spectacles.'

This might not have quite pleased the young knight, nor was it one of those truths which the abbot would have chosen to deliver in his hearing. But the knight had shaken him by the hand, said adieu, and was already at Hazelside, issuing particular orders to little troops of the archers and others, and occasionally chiding Thomas Dickson, who, with a degree of curiosity which the English knight was not very willing to excuse, had been endeavouring to get some account of the occurrences of the night.

'Peace, fellow!' he said, 'and mind thine own business, being well assured that the hour will come in which it will require all the attention thou canst give, leaving others to take care of their own affairs.'

'If I am suspected of anything,' answered Dickson, in a tone rather dogged and surly than otherwise, 'methinks it were but fair to let me know what accusation is brought against me. I need not tell you that chivalry prescribes that a knight should not attack an enemy undefined.'

'When you are a knight,' answered Sir Aymer de Valence, 'it will be time enough for me to reckon with you upon the points of form due to you by the laws of chivalry. Meanwhile, you had best let me know what share you have had in playing off the martial phantom which sounded the rebellious slogan of Douglas in the town of that name?'

'I know nothing of what you speak,' answered the goodman of Hazelside.

'See then,' said the knight, 'that you do not engage yourself in the affairs of other people, even if your conscience warrants that you are in no danger from your own.'

So saying, he rode off, not waiting any answer. The ideas which filled his head were to the following purpose:—

'I know not how it is, but one mist seems no sooner to clear away than we find ourselves engaged in another. I take it for granted that the disguised damsel is no other than the goddess of Walton's private idolatry, who has cost him and me so much trouble, and some certain degree of misunderstanding, during these last weeks. By my honour! this fair lady is right lavish in the pardon which she has so frankly bestowed upon me, and if she is willing to be less complaisant to Sir John de Walton, why then—— And what then? It surely does not infer that she would receive me into that place in her affections from which she has just expelled De Walton? Nor, if she did, could I avail myself of a change in favour of myself, at the expense of my friend and companion-in-arms. It were a folly even to dream of a thing so improbable. But with respect to the other business, it is worth serious consideration. Yon sexton seems to have kept company with dead bodies until he is unfit for the society of the living; and as to that Dickson of Hazelside, as they call him, there is no attempt against the English during these endless wars in which that man has not been concerned; had my life depended upon it, I could not have prevented myself from intimating my suspicions of him, let him take it as he lists.'

So saying, the knight spurred his horse, and arriving at Douglas Castle without farther adventure, demanded, in a tone of greater cordiality than he had of late used, whether he could be admitted to Sir John de Walton, having something of consequence to report to him. He was immediately ushered into an apartment in which the governor was seated at his solitary breakfast. Considering the terms upon which they had lately stood, the governor of Douglas Dale was somewhat surprised at the easy familiarity with which De Valence now approached him.

'Some uncommon news,' said Sir John, rather gravely, 'have brought me the honour of Sir Aymer de Valence's company.'

'It is,' answered Sir Aymer, 'what seems of high importance

to your interest, Sir John de Walton, and therefore I were to blame if I lost a moment in communicating it.'

'I shall be proud to profit by your intelligence,' said Sir John de Walton.

'And I, too,' said the young knight, 'am loth to lose the credit of having penetrated a mystery which blinded Sir John de Walton. At the same time, I do not wish to be thought capable of jesting with you, which might be the case were I, from misapprehension, to give a false key to this matter. With your permission, then, we will proceed thus: we go together to the place of Bertram the minstrel's confinement. I have in my possession a scroll from the young person who was entrusted to the care of the Abbot Jerome; it is written in a delicate female hand, and gives authority to the minstrel to declare the purpose which brought them to this vale of Douglas.'

'It must be as you say,' said Sir John de Walton, 'although I can scarce see occasion for adding so much form to a mystery which can be expressed in such small compass.'

Accordingly the two knights, the warder leading the way, proceeded to the dungeon to which the minstrel had been removed.

CHAPTER XIII

THE doors of the stronghold being undone displayed a dungeon such as in those days held victims hopeless of escape, but in which the ingenious knave of modern times would scarcely have deigned to remain many hours. The huge rings by which the fetters were soldered together and attached to the human body were, when examined minutely, found to be clenched together by riveting so very thin that, when rubbed with corrosive acid, or patiently ground with a bit of sandstone, the hold of the fetters upon each other might easily be forced asunder, and the purpose of them entirely frustrated. The locks also, large, and apparently very strong, were so coarsely made that an artist of small ingenuity could easily contrive to get the better of their fastenings upon the same principle. The daylight found its way to the subterranean dungeon only at noon, and through a passage which was purposely made tortuous, so as to exclude the rays of the sun, while it presented no obstacle to wind or rain. The doctrine that a prisoner was to be esteemed innocent until he should be found guilty by his peers was not understood in those days of brute force, and he was only accommodated with a lamp or other alleviation of his misery if his demeanour was quiet, and he appeared disposed to give his jailer no trouble by attempting to make his escape. Such a cell of confinement was that of Bertram, whose moderation of temper and patience had nevertheless procured for him such mitigations of his fate as the warder could grant. He was permitted to carry into his cell the old book, in the perusal of which he found an amusement of his solitude, together with writing-materials, and such other helps towards spending his time as were consistent with his abode in the bosom of the rock, and the degree of information with which his minstrel craft had possessed him. He raised his head from the table as the knights entered, while the governor observed to the young knight—

'As you seem to think yourself possessed of the secret of this prisoner, I leave it to you, Sir Aymer de Valence, to bring it to light in the manner which you shall judge most expedient. If the man or his son have suffered unnecessary hardship, it shall be my duty to make amends — which, I suppose, can be no very important matter.'

Bertram looked up, and fixed his eyes full upon the governor, but read nothing in his looks which indicated his being better acquainted than before with the secret of his imprisonment. Yet, upon turning his eye towards Sir Aymer, his countenance evidently lighted up, and the glance which passed between them was one of intelligence.

'You have my secret, then,' said he, 'and you know who it is that passes under the name of Augustine?'

Sir Aymer exchanged with him a look of acquiescence; while, the eyes of the governor glancing wildly from the prisoner to the knight of Valence, [he] exclaimed —

'Sir Aymer de Valence, as you are belted knight and Christian man, as you have honour to preserve on earth and a soul to rescue after death, I charge you to tell me the meaning of this mystery! It may be that you conceive, with truth, that you have subject of complaint against me. If so, I will satisfy you as a knight may.'

The minstrel spoke at the same moment. 'I charge this knight,' he said, 'by his vow of chivalry, that he do not divulge any secret belonging to a person of honour and of character, unless he has positive assurance that it is done entirely by that person's own consent.'

'Let this note remove your scruples,' said Sir Aymer, putting the scroll into the hands of the minstrel; 'and for you, Sir John de Walton, far from retaining the least feeling of any misunderstanding which may have existed between us, I am disposed entirely to bury it in forgetfulness, as having arisen out of a series of mistakes which no mortal could have comprehended. And do not be offended, my dear Sir John, when I protest, on my knightly faith, that I pity the pain which I think this scroll is likely to give you, and that, if my utmost efforts can be of the least service to you in unravelling this tangled skein, I will contribute them with as much earnestness as ever I did aught in my life. This faithful minstrel will now see that he can have no difficulty in yielding up a secret which I doubt not, but for the writing I have just put into his hands, he would have continued to keep with unshaken fidelity.'

Sir Aymer now placed in De Walton's hand a note, in which he had, ere he left St. Bride's convent, signified his own interpretation of the mystery; and the governor had scarcely read the name it contained, before the same name was pronounced aloud by Bertram, who at the same moment handed to the governor the scroll which he had received from the knight of Valence.

The white plume which floated over the knight's cap of maintenance, which was worn as a head-piece within doors, was not more pale in complexion than was the knight himself at the unexpected and surprising information that the lady who was, in chivalrous phrase, empress of his thoughts and commander of his actions, and to whom, even in less fantastic times, he must have owed the deepest gratitude for the generous election which she had made in his favour, was the same person whom he had threatened with personal violence, and subjected to hardships and affronts which he would not willingly have bestowed even upon the meanest of her sex.

Yet Sir John de Walton seemed at first scarcely to comprehend the numerous ill consequences which might probably follow this unhappy complication of mistakes. He took the paper from the minstrel's hand, and while his eye, assisted by the lamp, wandered over the characters without apparently their conveying any distinct impression to his understanding, De Valence even became alarmed that he was about to lose his faculties.

'For Heaven's sake, sir,' he said, 'be a man, and support with manly steadiness these unexpected occurrences — I would fain think they will reach to nothing else — which the wit of man could not have prevented. This fair lady, I would fain hope, cannot be much hurt or deeply offended by a train of circumstances the natural consequence of your anxiety to discharge perfectly a duty upon which must depend the accomplishment of all the hopes she had permitted you to entertain. In God's name, rouse up, sir; let it not be said that an apprehended frown of a fair lady hath damped to such a degree the courage of the boldest knight in England: be what men have called you, "Walton the Unwavering." In Heaven's name, let us at least see that the lady is indeed offended before we conclude that she is irreconcilably so. To whose fault are we to ascribe the source of all these errors? Surely, with all due respect, to the caprice of the lady herself, which has engendered such a nest of mistakes. Think of it as a man and as a

soldier. Suppose that you yourself, or I, desirous of proving the fidelity of our sentinels, or for any other reason, good or bad, attempted to enter this Dangerous Castle of Douglas without giving the password to the warders, would we be entitled to blame those upon duty if, not knowing our persons, they manfully refused us entrance, made us prisoners, and mishandled us while resisting our attempt, in terms of the orders which we ourselves had imposed upon them? What is there that makes a difference between such a sentinel and yourself, John de Walton, in this curious affair, which, by Heaven! would rather form a gay subject for the minstrelsy of this excellent bard than the theme of a tragic lay? Come! look not thus, Sir John de Walton; be angry, if you will, with the lady who has committed such a piece of folly; or with me, who have rode up and down nearly all night on a fool's errand, and spoiled my best horse, in absolute uncertainty how I shall get another till my uncle of Pembroke and I shall be reconciled; or, lastly, if you desire to be totally absurd in your wrath, direct it against this worthy minstrel on account of his rare fidelity, and punish him for that for which he better deserves a chain of gold. Let passion out if you will; but chase this desponding gloom from the brow of a man and a belted knight.'

Sir John de Walton made an effort to speak, and succeeded with some difficulty. 'Aymer de Valence,' he said, 'in irritating a madman you do but sport with your own life': and then remained silent.

'I am glad you can say so much,' replied his friend; 'for I was not jesting when I said I would rather that you were at variance with me than that you laid the whole blame on yourself. It would be courteous, I think, to set this minstrel instantly at liberty. Meantime, for his lady's sake, I will entreat him, in all honour, to be our guest till the Lady Augusta de Berkely shall do us the same honour, and to assist us in our search after her place of retirement. Good minstrel,' he continued, 'you hear what I say, and you will not, I suppose, be surprised that, in all honour and kind usage, you find yourself detained for a short space in this Castle of Douglas?'

'You seem, sir knight,' replied the minstrel, 'not so much to keep your eye upon the right of doing what you should as to possess the might of doing what you would. I must necessarily be guided by your advice, since you have the power to make it a command.'

'And I trust,' continued De Valence, 'that, when your mistress and you again meet, we shall have the benefit of your intercession for anything which we may have done to displease her, considering that the purpose of our action was exactly the reverse.'

'Let me,' said Sir John de Walton, 'say a single word. I will offer thee a chain of gold, heavy enough to bear down the weight of these shackles, as a sign of regret for having condemned thee to suffer so many indignities.'

'Enough said, Sir John,' said De Valence; 'let us promise no more till this good minstrel shall see some sign of performance. Follow me this way, and I will tell thee in private of other tidings, which it is important that you should know.'

So saying, he withdrew De Walton from the dungeon, and sending for the old knight, Sir Philip de Montenay, already mentioned, who acted as seneschal of the castle, he commanded that the minstrel should be enlarged from the dungeon, well looked to in other respects, yet prohibited, though with every mark of civility, from leaving the castle without a trusty attendant.

'And now, Sir John de Walton,' he said, 'methinks you are a little churlish in not ordering me some breakfast, after I have been all night engaged in your affairs; and a cup of muscadell would, I think, be no bad induction to a full consideration of this perplexed matter.'

'Thou knowest,' answered De Walton, 'that thou mayst call for what thou wilt, provided always thou tellest me, without loss of time, what else thou knowest respecting the will of the lady against whom we have all sinned so grievously, and I, alas! beyond hope of forgiveness.'

'Trust me, I hope,' said the knight of Valence, 'the good lady bears me no malice, as indeed she has expressly renounced any ill-will against me. The words, you see, are as plain as you yourself may read — "The lady pardons poor Aymer de Valence, and willingly, for having been involved in a mistake to which she herself led the way; she herself will at all times be happy to meet with him as an acquaintance, and never to think farther of these few days' history, except as matter of mirth and ridicule." So it is expressly written and set down.'

'Yes,' replied Sir John de Walton, 'but see you not that her offending lover is expressly excluded from the amnesty granted to the lesser offender? Mark you not the concluding para-

'For Heaven's sake,' replied De Walton, 'do as thou wilt, so thou make me clear of thy well-intended babble.'

'Nay, thou shalt not brawl me out of my powers of argument,' said De Valence, laughing, and helping himself to a brimming cup of wine; 'if thou acknowledgest thyself conquered, I am contented to give the victory to the inspiring strength of the jovial liquor.'

'Do as thou listest,' said De Walton, 'but make an end of an argument which thou canst not comprehend.'

'I deny the charge,' answered the younger knight, wiping his lips, after having finished his draught; 'and listen, Walton the Warlike, to a chapter in the history of women, in which thou art more unskilled than I would wish thee to be. Thou canst not deny that, be it right or wrong, the Lady Augusta hath ventured more forward with you than is usual upon the sea of affection: she boldly made thee her choice, while thou wert as yet known to her only as a flower of English chivalry. Faith, and I respect her for her frankness; but it was a choice which the more cold of her own sex might perhaps claim occasion to term rash and precipitate. Nay, be not, I pray thee, offended—I am far from thinking or saying so; on the contrary, I will uphold with my lance her selection of John de Walton against the minions of a court to be a wise and generous choice, and her own behaviour as alike candid and noble. But she herself is not unlikely to dread unjust misconstruction—a fear of which may not improbably induce her, upon any occasion, to seize some opportunity of showing an unwonted and unusual rigour towards her lover, in order to balance her having extended towards him, in the beginning of their intercourse, somewhat of an unusual degree of frank encouragement. Nay, it might be easy for her lover so far to take part against himself, by arguing as thou dost when out of thy senses, as to make it difficult for her to withdraw from an argument which he himself was foolish enough to strengthen; and thus, like a maiden too soon taken at her first nay-say, she shall perhaps be allowed no opportunity of bearing herself according to her real feelings, or retracting a sentence issued with the consent of the party whose hopes it destroys.'

'I have heard thee, De Valence,' answered the governor of Douglas Dale; 'nor is it difficult for me to admit that these thy lessons may serve as a chart to many a female heart, but not to that of Augusta de Berkely. By my life, I say I would much sooner be deprived of the merit of those few deeds of

chivalry which thou sayest have procured for me such enviable distinction than I would act upon them with the insolence, as if I said that my place in the lady's bosom was too firmly fixed to be shaken even by the success of a worthier man, or by my own gross failure in respect to the object of my attachment. No, herself alone shall have power to persuade me that even goodness equal to that of an interceding saint will restore me to the place in her affections which I have most unworthily forfeited by a stupidity only to be compared to that of brutes.'

'If you are so minded,' said Aymer de Valence, 'I have only one word more — forgive me if I speak it peremptorily — the lady, as you say, and say truly, must be the final arbitress in this question. My arguments do not extend to insisting that you should claim her hand whether she herself will or no; but to learn her determination, it is necessary that you should find out where she is, of which I am unfortunately not able to inform you.'

'How! what mean you?' exclaimed the governor, who now only began to comprehend the extent of his misfortune. 'Whither hath she fled, or with whom?'

'She is fled, for what I know,' said De Valence, 'in search of a more enterprising lover than one who is so willing to interpret every air of frost as a killing blight to his hopes; perhaps she seeks the Black Douglas, or some such hero of the thistle, to reward with her lands, her lordships, and beauty those virtues of enterprise and courage of which John de Walton was at one time thought possessed. But, seriously, events are passing around us of strange import. I saw enough last night, on my way to St. Bride's, to make me suspicious of every one. I sent to you as a prisoner the old sexton of the church of Douglas. I found him contumacious as to some inquiries which I thought it proper to prosecute; but of this more at another time. The escape of this lady adds greatly to the difficulties which encircle this devoted castle.'

'Aymer de Valence,' replied De Walton, in a solemn and animated tone, 'Douglas Castle shall be defended, as we have hitherto been able, with the aid of Heaven, to spread from its battlements the broad banner of St. George. Come of me what list during my life, I will die the faithful lover of Augusta de Berkely, even although I no longer live as her chosen knight. There are cloisters and hermitages —'

'Ay, marry are there,' replied Sir Aymer, 'and girdles of hemp, moreover, and beads of oak; but all these we omit in

our reckonings till we discover where the Lady Augusta is, and what she purposes to do in this matter.'

'You say well,' replied De Walton; 'let us hold counsel together by what means we shall, if possible, discover the lady's too hasty retreat, by which she has done me great wrong — I mean, if she supposed her commands would not have been fully obeyed, had she honoured with them the governor of Douglas Dale, or any who are under his command.'

'Now,' replied De Valence, 'you again speak like a true son of chivalry. With your permission, I would summon this minstrel to our presence. His fidelity to his mistress has been remarkable; and, as matters stand now, we must take instant measures for tracing the place of her retreat.'

CHAPTER XIV

The way is long, my children — long and rough,
The moors are dreary, and the woods are dark ;
But he that creeps from cradle on to grave,
Unskilled save in the velvet course of fortune,
Hath missed the discipline of noble hearts.

Old Play.

IT was yet early in the day when, after the governor and De Valence had again summoned Bertram to their councils, the garrison of Douglas was mustered, and a number of small parties, in addition to those already despatched by De Valence from Hazelside, were sent out to scour the woods in pursuit of the fugitives, with strict injunctions to treat them, if overtaken, with the utmost respect, and to obey their commands, keeping an eye, however, on the place where they might take refuge. To facilitate this result, some who were men of discretion were entrusted with the secret who the supposed pilgrim and the fugitive nun really were. The whole ground, whether forest or moorland, within many miles of Douglas Castle was covered and traversed by parties, whose anxiety to detect the fugitives was equal to the reward for their safe recovery liberally offered by De Walton and De Valence. They spared not, meantime, to make such inquiries in all directions as might bring to light any machinations of the Scottish insurgents which might be on foot in those wild districts, of which, as we have said before, De Valence, in particular, entertained strong suspicions. Their instructions were, in case of finding such, to proceed against the persons engaged, by arrest and otherwise, in the most rigorous manner, such as had been commanded by De Walton himself at the time when the Black Douglas and his accomplices had been the principal objects of his wakeful suspicions. These various detachments had greatly reduced the strength of the garrison ; yet, although numerous, alert, and despatched in every direction, they had not the

fortune either to fall on the trace of the Lady of Berkely or to encounter any party whatever of the insurgent Scottish.

Meanwhile our fugitives had, as we have seen, set out from the convent of St. Bride under the guidance of a cavalier, of whom the Lady Augusta knew nothing save that he was to guide their steps in a direction where they would not be exposed to the risk of being overtaken. At length Margaret de Hautlieu herself spoke upon the subject.

'You have made no inquiry,' she said, 'Lady Augusta, whither you are travelling, or under whose charge, although methinks it should much concern you to know.'

'Is it not enough for me to be aware,' answered Lady Augusta, 'that I am travelling, kind sister, under the protection of one to whom you yourself trust as to a friend; and why need I be anxious for any farther assurance of my safety?'

'Simply,' said Margaret de Hautlieu, 'because the persons with whom, from national as well as personal circumstances, I stand connected are perhaps not exactly the protectors to whom you, lady, can with such perfect safety entrust yourself.'

'In what sense,' said the Lady Augusta, 'do you use these words?'

'Because,' replied Margaret de Hautlieu, 'the Bruce, the Douglas, Malcolm Fleming, and others of that party, although they are incapable of abusing such an advantage to any dishonourable purpose, might nevertheless, under a strong temptation, consider you as an hostage thrown into their hands by Providence, through whom they might meditate the possibility of gaining some benefit to their dispersed and dispirited party.'

'They might make me,' answered the Lady Augusta, 'the subject of such a treaty when I was dead, but, believe me, never while I drew vital breath. Believe me also that, with whatever pain, shame, or agony I would again deliver myself up to the power of De Walton — yes, I would rather put myself in his hands. What do I say? *His!* I would rather surrender myself to the meanest archer of my native country than combine with its foes to work mischief to Merry England — my own England — that country which is the envy of every other country, and the pride of all who can term themselves her natives!'

'I thought that your choice might prove so,' said Lady Margaret; 'and since you have honoured me with your confidence, gladly would I provide for your liberty by placing you as nearly in the situation which you yourself desire as my poor

means have the power of accomplishing. In half an hour we shall be in danger of being taken by the English parties, which will be instantly dispersed in every direction in quest of us. Now take notice, lady, I know a place in which I can take refuge with my friends and countrymen, those gallant Scots, who have never even in this dishonoured age bent the knee to Baal. For their honour — their nicety of honour, I could in other days have answered with my own; but of late, I am bound to tell you, they have been put to those trials by which the most generous affections may be soured, and driven to a species of frenzy the more wild that it is founded originally on the noblest feelings. A person who feels himself deprived of his natural birthright, denounced, exposed to confiscation and death, because he avouches the rights of his king, the cause of his country, ceases on his part to be nice or precise in estimating the degree of retaliation which it is lawful for him to exercise in the requital of such injuries; and, believe me, bitterly should I lament having guided you into a situation which you might consider afflicting or degrading.'

'In a word, then,' said the English lady, 'what is it you apprehend I am like to suffer at the hands of your friends, whom I must be excused for terming rebels?'

'If,' said the Sister Ursula, '*your* friends, whom I should term oppressors and tyrants, take our land and our lives, seize our castles and confiscate our property, you must confess that the rough laws of war indulge *mine* with the privilege of retaliation. There can be no fear that such men, under any circumstances, would ever exercise cruelty or insult upon a lady of your rank; but it is another thing to calculate that they will abstain from such means of extorting advantage from your captivity as are common in warfare. You would not, I think, wish to be delivered up to the English, on consideration of Sir John de Walton surrendering the Castle of Douglas to its natural lord; yet, were you in the hands of the Bruce or Douglas, although I can answer for your being treated with all the respect which they have the means of showing, yet I own their putting you at such a ransom might be by no means unlikely.'

'I would sooner die,' said the Lady Berkely, 'than have my name mixed up in a treaty so disgraceful; and De Walton's reply to it would, I am certain, be to strike the head from the messenger, and throw it from the highest tower of Douglas Castle.'

'Where, then, lady, would you now go,' said Sister Ursula, 'were the choice in your power?'

'To my own castle,' answered Lady Augusta, 'where, if necessary, I could be defended even against the King himself, until I could place at least my person under the protection of the church.'

'In that case,' replied Margaret de Hautlieu, 'my power of rendering you assistance is only precarious, yet it comprehends a choice which I will willingly submit to your decision, notwithstanding I thereby subject the secrets of my friends to some risk of being discovered and frustrated. But the confidence which you have placed in me imposes on me the necessity of committing to you a like trust. It rests with you whether you will proceed with me to the secret rendezvous of the Douglas and his friends, which I may be blamed for making known, and there take your chance of the reception which you may encounter, since I cannot warrant you of anything save honourable treatment, so far as your person is concerned; or, if you should think this too hazardous, make the best of your way at once for the Border, in which last case I will proceed as far as I can with you towards the English line, and then leave you to pursue your journey, and to obtain a guard and a conductor among your own countrymen. Meantime, it will be well for me if I escape being taken, since the abbot would not shrink at inflicting upon me the death due to an apostate nun.'

'Such cruelty, my sister, could hardly be inflicted upon one who had never taken the religious vows, and who still, according to the laws of the church, had a right to make a choice between the world and the veil.'

'Such choice as they gave their gallant victims,' said Lady Margaret, 'who have fallen into English hands during these merciless wars — such choice as they gave to Wallace, the Champion of Scotland; such as they gave to Hay, the gentle and the free; to Sommerville, the flower of chivalry; and to Athol, the blood relation of King Edward himself — all of whom were as much traitors, under which name they were executed, as Margaret de Hautlieu is an apostate nun, and subject to the rule of the cloister.'

She spoke with some eagerness, for she felt as if the English lady imputed to her more coldness than she was, in such doubtful circumstances, conscious of manifesting.

'And after all,' she proceeded, 'you, Lady Augusta de

Berkely, what do you venture, if you run the risk of falling into the hands of your lover? What dreadful risk do you incur? You need not, methinks, fear being immured between four walls, with a basket of bread and a cruise of water, which, were I seized, would be the only support allowed to me for the short space that my life would be prolonged. Nay, even were you to be betrayed to the rebel Scots, as you call them, a captivity among the hills, sweetened by the hope of deliverance, and rendered tolerable by all the alleviations which the circumstances of your captors allowed them the means of supplying, were not, I think, a lot so very hard to endure.'

'Nevertheless,' answered the Lady of Berkely, 'frightful enough it must have appeared to me, since, to fly from such, I threw myself upon your guidance.'

'And whatever you think or suspect,' answered the novice, 'I am as true to you as ever was one maiden to another; and as sure as ever Sister Ursula was true to her vows, although they were never completed, so will I be faithful to your secret, even at the risk of betraying my own. Hearken, lady!' she said, suddenly pausing, 'do you hear that?'

The sound to which she alluded was the same imitation of the cry of an owl which the lady had before heard under the walls of the convent.

'These sounds,' said Margaret de Hautlieu, 'announce that one is near more able than I am to direct us in this matter. I must go forward and speak with him; and this man, our guide, will remain by you for a little space; nor, when he quits your bridle, need you wait for any other signal, but ride forward on the woodland path, and obey the advice and directions which will be given you.'

'Stay — stay, Sister Ursula!' cried the Lady de Berkely — a bandon me not in this moment of uncertainty and distress!'

'It must be, for the sake of both,' returned Margaret de Hautlieu. 'I also am in uncertainty, I also am in distress, and patience and obedience are the only virtues which can save us both.'

So saying, she struck her horse with the riding-rod, and, moving briskly forward, disappeared among the boughs of a tangled thicket. The Lady of Berkely would have followed her companion, but the cavalier who attended them laid a strong hand upon the bridle of her palfrey, with a look which implied that he would not permit her to proceed in that direction. Terrified, therefore, though she could not exactly state

a reason why, the Lady of Berkely remained with her eyes fixed upon the thicket, instinctively, as it were, expecting to see a band of English archers, or rugged Scottish insurgents, issue from its tangled skirts, and doubtful which she should have most considered as the objects of her terror. In the distress of her uncertainty, she again attempted to move forward, but the stern check which her attendant again bestowed upon her bridle proved sufficiently that, in restraining her wishes, the stranger was not likely to spare the strength which he certainly possessed. At length, after some ten minutes had elapsed, the cavalier withdrew his hand from her bridle, and pointing with his lance towards the thicket, through which there winded a narrow, scarce visible path, seemed to intimate to the lady that her road lay in that direction, and that he would no longer prevent her following it.

'Do you not go with me?' said the lady, who, having been accustomed to this man's company since they left the convent, had by degrees come to look upon him as a sort of protector. He, however, gravely shook his head, as if to excuse complying with a request which it was not in his power to grant; and, turning his steed in a different direction, retired at a pace which soon carried him from her sight. She had then no alternative but to take the path of the thicket which had been followed by Margaret de Hautlieu, nor did she pursue it long before coming in sight of a singular spectacle.

The trees grew wider as the lady advanced, and when she entered the thicket she perceived that, though hedged in as it were by an enclosure of copsewood, it was in the interior altogether occupied by a few of the magnificent trees, such as seemed to have been the ancestors of the forest, and which, though few in number, were sufficient to overshadow all the unoccupied ground by the great extent of their complicated branches. Beneath one of these lay stretched something of a grey colour, which, as it drew itself together, exhibited the figure of a man sheathed in armour, but strangely accoutred, and in a manner so bizarre as to indicate some of the wild fancies peculiar to the knights of that period. His armour was ingeniously painted so as to represent a skeleton, the ribs being constituted by the corslet and its back-piece. The shield represented an owl with its wings spread, a device which was repeated upon the helmet, which appeared to be completely covered by an image of the same bird of ill omen. But that which was particularly calculated to excite surprise in the

spectator was the great height and thinness of the figure, which, as it arose from the ground and placed itself in an erect posture, seemed rather to resemble an apparition in the act of extricating itself from the grave than that of an ordinary man rising upon his feet. The horse, too, upon which the lady rode started back and snorted, either at the sudden change of posture of this ghastly specimen of chivalry, or disagreeably affected by some odour which accompanied his presence. The lady herself manifested some alarm, for although she did not utterly believe she was in the presence of a supernatural being, yet, among all the strange half-frantic disguises of chivalry, this was assuredly the most uncouth which she had ever seen; and considering how often the knights of the period pushed their dreamy fancies to the borders of insanity, it seemed at best no very safe adventure to meet one accoutred in the emblems of the King of Terrors himself, alone, and in the midst of a wild forest. Be the knight's character and purposes what they might, she resolved, however, to accost him in the language and manner observed in romances upon such occasions, in the hope even that if he were a madman he might prove a peaceable one, and accessible to civility.

'Sir knight,' she said, in as firm a tone as she could assume, 'right sorry am I if, by my hasty approach, I have disturbed your solitary meditations. My horse, sensible, I think, of the presence of yours, brought me hither, without my being aware whom or what I was to encounter.'

'I am one,' answered the stranger, in a solemn tone, 'whom few men seek to meet, till the time comes that they can avoid me no longer.'

'You speak, sir knight,' replied the Lady de Berkely, 'according to the dismal character of which it has pleased you to assume the distinction. May I appeal to one whose exterior is so formidable, for the purpose of requesting some directions to guide me through this wild wood; as, for instance, what is the name of the nearest castle, town, or hostelry, and by what course I am best likely to reach such?'

'It is a singular audacity,' answered the Knight of the Tomb, 'that would enter into conversation with him who is termed the Inexorable, the Unsparing, and the Pitiless, whom even the most miserable forbears to call to his assistance, lest his prayers should be too soon answered.'

'Sir knight,' replied the Lady Augusta, 'the character which you have assumed, unquestionably for good reasons,

dictates to you a peculiar course of speech ; but although your part is a sad one, it does not, I should suppose, render it necessary for you to refuse those acts of civility to which you must have bound yourself in taking the high vows of chivalry.'

'If you will trust to my guidance,' replied the ghastly figure, 'there is only one condition upon which I can grant you the information which you require; and that is, that you follow my footsteps without any questions asked as to the tendency of our journey.'

'I suppose I must submit to your conditions,' she answered, 'if you are indeed pleased to take upon yourself the task of being my guide. In my heart I conceive you to be one of the unhappy gentlemen of Scotland who are now in arms, as they say, for the defence of their liberties. A rash undertaking has brought me within the sphere of your influence, and now the only favour I have to request of you, against whom I never did nor planned any evil, is the guidance which your knowledge of the country permits you easily to afford me in my way to the frontiers of England. Believe that what I may see of your haunts or of your practices shall be to me things invisible, as if they were actually concealed by the sepulchre itself of the king of which it has pleased you to assume the attributes; and if a sum of money, enough to be the ransom of a wealthy earl, will purchase such a favour at need, such a ransom will be frankly paid, and with as much fidelity as ever it was rendered by a prisoner to the knight by whom he was taken. Do not reject me, princely Bruce — noble Douglas — if indeed it is to either of these that I address myself in this my last extremity; men speak of both as fearful enemies, but generous knights and faithful friends. Let me entreat you to remember how much you would wish your own friends and connexions to meet with compassion under similar circumstances at the hands of the knights of England.'

'And have they done so?' replied the knight, in a voice more gloomy than before, 'or do you act wisely, while imploring the protection of one whom you believe to be a true Scottish knight, for no other reason than the extreme and extravagant misery of his appearance — is it, I say, well or wise to remind him of the mode in which the lords of England have treated the lovely maidens and the high-born dames of Scotland? Have not their prison cages been suspended from the battlements of castles, that their captivity might be kept in view of every base burgher who should desire to look upon the miseries

of the noblest peeresses, yea, even the queen of Scotland?¹ Is this a recollection which can inspire a Scottish knight with compassion towards an English lady? or is it a thought which can do ought but swell the deeply sworn hatred of Edward Plantagenet, the author of these evils, that boils in every drop of Scottish blood which still feels the throb of life? No; it is all you can expect if, cold and pitiless as the sepulchre I represent, I leave you unassisted in the helpless condition in which you describe yourself to be.'

'You will not be so inhuman,' replied the lady; 'in doing so, you must surrender every right to honest fame which you have won either by sword or lance. You must surrender every pretence to that justice which affects the merit of supporting the weak against the strong. You must make it your principle to avenge the wrongs and tyranny of Edward Plantagenet upon the dames and damosels of England who have neither access to his councils nor perhaps give him their approbation in his wars against Scotland.'

'It would not, then,' said the Knight of the Sepulchre, 'induce you to depart from your request, should I tell you the evils to which you would subject yourself should we fall into the hands of the English troops, and should they find you under such ill-omened protection as my own?'

'Be assured,' said the lady, 'the consideration of such an event does not in the least shake my resolution or desire of confiding in your protection. You may probably know who I am, and may judge how far even Edward would hold himself entitled to extend punishment towards me.'

'How am I to know you,' replied the ghostly cavalier, 'or your circumstances? They must be extraordinary indeed if they could form a check, either of justice or humanity, upon the revengeful feelings of Edward. All who know him are well assured that it is no ordinary motive that will induce him to depart from the indulgence of his evil temper. But be it as it may, you, lady, if a lady you be, throw yourself as a burden upon me, and I must discharge myself of my trust as I best may; for this purpose you must be guided implicitly by my directions, which will be given after the fashion of those of the spiritual world, being intimations, rather than detailed instructions, for your conduct, and expressed rather by commands than by any reason or argument. In this way it is possible that I may be of service to you; in any other case, it is most likely

¹ See Prison Cages. Note 9.

that I may fail you at need, and melt from your side like a phantom which dreads the approach of day.'

'You cannot be so cruel!' answered the lady. 'A gentleman, a knight, and a nobleman — and I persuade myself I speak to all — hath duties which he cannot abandon.'

'He has, I grant it, and they are most sacred to me,' answered the Spectral Knight; 'but I have also duties whose obligations are doubly binding, and to which I must sacrifice those which would otherwise lead me to devote myself to your rescue. The only question is, whether you feel inclined to accept my protection on the limited terms on which alone I can extend it, or whether you deem it better that each go their own way, and limit themselves to their own resources, and trust the rest to Providence?'

'Alas!' replied the lady, 'beset and hard pressed as I am, to ask me to form a resolution for myself is like calling on a wretch, in the act of falling from a precipice, to form a calm judgment by what twig he may best gain the chance of breaking his fall. His answer must necessarily be, that he will cling to that which he can easiest lay hold of, and trust the rest to Providence. I accept, therefore, your offer of protection, in the modified way you are pleased to limit it, and I put my faith in Heaven and in you. To aid me effectually, however, you must know my name and my circumstances.'

'All these,' answered the Knight of the Sepulchre, 'have already been told me by your late companion; for deem not, young lady, that either beauty, rank, extended domains, unlimited wealth, or the highest accomplishments can weigh anything in the consideration of him who wears the trappings of the tomb, and whose affections and desires are long buried in the charnel-house.'

'May your faith,' said the Lady Augusta de Berkely, 'be as steady as your words appear severe, and I submit to your guidance without the least doubt or fear that it will prove otherwise than as I venture to hope.'

CHAPTER XV

LIKE the dog following its master, when engaged in training him to the sport in which he desires he should excel, the Lady Augusta felt herself occasionally treated with a severity calculated to impress upon her the most implicit obedience and attention to the Knight of the Tomb, in whom she had speedily persuaded herself she saw a principal man among the retainers of Douglas, if not James of Douglas himself. Still, however, the ideas which the lady had formed of the redoubted Douglas were those of a knight highly accomplished in the duties of chivalry, devoted in particular to the service of the fair sex, and altogether unlike the personage with whom she found herself so strangely united, or rather for the present enthralled to. Nevertheless, when, as if to abridge farther communication, he turned short into one of the mazes of the wood, and seemed to adopt a pace which, from the nature of the ground, the horse on which the Lady Augusta was mounted had difficulty to keep up with, she followed him with the alarm and speed of the young spaniel, which, from fear rather than fondness, endeavours to keep up with the track of its severe master. The simile, it is true, is not a very polite one, nor entirely becoming an age when women were worshipped with a certain degree of devotion ; but such circumstances as the present were also rare, and the Lady Augusta de Berkely could not but persuade herself that the terrible Champion, whose name had been so long the theme of her anxiety, and the terror indeed of the whole country, might be able, some way or other, to accomplish her deliverance. She, therefore, exerted herself to the utmost so as to keep pace with the phantom-like apparition, and followed the knight, as the evening shadow keeps watch upon the belated rustic.

As the lady obviously suffered under the degree of exertion necessary to keep her palfrey from stumbling in these steep

and broken paths, the Knight of the Tomb slackened his pace, looked anxiously around him, and muttered apparently to himself, though probably intended for his companion's ear, 'There is no occasion for so much haste.'

He proceeded at a slower rate until they seemed to be on the brink of a ravine, being one of many irregularities on the surface of the ground, effected by the sudden torrents peculiar to that country, and which, winding among the trees and copse-wood, formed, as it were, a net of places of concealment, opening into each other, so that there was perhaps no place in the world so fit for the purpose of ambuscade. The spot where the Borderer Turnbull had made his escape at the hunting-match was one specimen of this broken country, and perhaps connected itself with the various thickets and passes through which the knight and pilgrim occasionally seemed to take their way, though that ravine was at a considerable distance from their present route.

Meanwhile the knight led the way, as if rather with the purpose of bewildering the Lady Augusta amidst these interminable woods than following any exact or fixed path. Here they ascended, and anon appeared to descend in the same direction, finding only boundless wildernesses and varied combinations of tangled woodland scenery. Such part of the country as seemed arable the knight appeared carefully to avoid; yet he could not direct his course with so much certainty but that he occasionally crossed the path of inhabitants and cultivators, who showed a consciousness of so singular a presence, but never, as the lady observed, evinced any symptoms of recognition. The inference was obvious, that the Spectre Knight was known in the country, and that he possessed adherents or accomplices there, who were at least so far his friends as to avoid giving any alarm, which might be the means of his discovery. The well-imitated cry of the night-owl, too frequent a guest in the wilderness that its call should be a subject of surprise, seemed to be a signal generally understood among them; for it was heard in different parts of the wood, and the Lady Augusta, experienced in such journeys by her former travels under the guidance of the minstrel Bertram, was led to observe that, on hearing such wild notes, her guide changed the direction of his course, and betook himself to paths which led through deeper wilds and more impenetrable thickets. This happened so often, that a new alarm came upon the unfortunate pilgrim, which suggested other motives of terror.

Was she not the confidante, and almost the tool, of some artful design, laid with a view to an extensive operation, which was destined to terminate, as the efforts of Douglas had before done, in the surprise of his hereditary castle, the massacre of the English garrison, and finally in the dishonour and death of that Sir John de Walton upon whose fate she had long believed, or taught herself to believe, that her own was dependent ?

It no sooner flashed across the mind of the Lady Augusta that she was engaged in some such conspiracy with a Scottish insurgent than she shuddered at the consequences of the dark transactions in which she had now become involved, and which appeared to have a tendency so very different from what she had at first apprehended.

The hours of the morning of this remarkable day, being that of Palm Sunday, were thus drawn out in wandering from place to place ; while the Lady de Berkely occasionally interposed by petitions for liberty, which she endeavoured to express in the most moving and pathetic manner, and by offers of wealth and treasures, to which no answer whatever was returned by her strange guide.

At length, as if worn out by his captive's importunity, the knight, coming close up to the bridle-rein of the Lady Augusta, said in a solemn tone —

‘I am, as you may well believe, none of those knights who roam through wood and wild seeking adventures, by which I may obtain grace in the eyes of a fair lady. Yet will I to a certain degree grant the request which thou dost solicit so anxiously, and the arbitration of thy fate shall depend upon the pleasure of him to whose will thou hast expressed thyself ready to submit thine own. I will, on our arrival at the place of our destination, which is now at hand, write to Sir John de Walton, and send my letter, together with thy fair self, by a special messenger. He will, no doubt, speedily attend our summons, and thou shalt thyself be satisfied that even he who has as yet appeared deaf to entreaty, and insensible to earthly affections, has still some sympathy for beauty and for virtue. I will put the choice of safety and thy future happiness into thine own hands and those of the man whom thou hast chosen ; and thou mayst select which thou wilt betwixt those and misery.’

While he thus spoke, one of those ravines or clefts in the earth seemed to yawn before them, and entering it at the upper end, the Spectre Knight, with an attention which he had not yet shown, guided the lady's courser by the rein down the

broken and steep path by which alone the bottom of the tangled dingle was accessible.

When placed on firm ground after the dangers of a descent, in which her palfrey seemed to be sustained by the personal strength and address of the singular being who had hold of the bridle, the lady looked with some astonishment at a place so well adapted for concealment as that which she had now reached. It appeared evident that it was used for this purpose, for more than one stifled answer was given to a very low bugle-note emitted by the Knight of the Tomb; and when the same note was repeated, about half a score of armed men, some wearing the dress of soldiers, others those of shepherds and agriculturists, showed themselves imperfectly, as if acknowledging the summons.

CHAPTER XVI

‘**H**AIL to you, my gallant friends!’ said the Knight of the Tomb to his companions, who seemed to welcome him with the eagerness of men engaged in the same perilous undertaking. ‘The winter has passed over, the festival of Palm Sunday is come, and as surely as the ice and snow of this season shall not remain to chill the earth through the ensuing summer, so surely we, in a few hours, keep our word to those Southern braggarts, who think their language of boasting and malice has as much force over our Scottish bosoms as the blast possesses over the autumn fruits; but it is not so. While we choose to remain concealed, they may as vainly seek to descry us as a housewife would search for the needle she has dropped among the withered foliage of yon gigantic oak. Yet a few hours, and the lost needle shall become the exterminating sword of the Genius of Scotland, avenging ten thousand injuries, and especially the life of the gallant Lord Douglas, cruelly done to death as an exile from his native country.’

An exclamation between a yell and a groan burst from the assembled retainers of Douglas, upon being reminded of the recent death of their chieftain; while they seemed at the same time sensible of the necessity of making little noise, lest they should give the alarm to some of the numerous English parties which were then traversing different parts of the forest. The acclamation, so cautiously uttered, had scarce died away in silence, when the Knight of the Tomb, or, to call him by his proper name, Sir James Douglas, again addressed his handful of faithful followers.

‘One effort, my friends, may yet be made to end our strife with the Southron without bloodshed. Fate has within a few hours thrown into my power the young heiress of Berkely, for whose sake it is said Sir John de Walton keeps with such

obstinacy the castle which is mine by inheritance. Is there one among you who dare go, as the honourable escort of Augusta de Berkely, bearing a letter, explaining the terms on which I am willing to restore her to her lover, to freedom, and to her English lordships ?

‘If there is none other,’ said a tall man, dressed in the tattered attire of a woodsman, and being, in fact, no other than the very Michael Turnbull who had already given so extraordinary a proof of his undaunted manhood, ‘I will gladly be the person who will be the lady’s henchman on this expedition.’

‘Thou art never wanting,’ said the Douglas, ‘where a manly deed is to be done ; but remember, this lady must pledge to us her word and oath that she will hold herself our faithful prisoner, rescue or no rescue ; that she will consider herself as pledged for the life, freedom, and fair usage of Michael Turnbull ; and that, if Sir John de Walton refuse my terms, she must hold herself obliged to return with Turnbull to our presence, in order to be disposed of at our pleasure.’

There was much in these conditions which struck the Lady Augusta with natural doubt and horror ; nevertheless, strange as it may seem, the declaration of the Douglas gave a species of decision to her situation which might have otherwise been unattainable ; and, from the high opinion which she entertained of the Douglas’s chivalry, she could not bring herself to think that any part which he might play in the approaching drama would be other than that which a perfect good knight would, under all circumstances, maintain towards his enemy. Even with respect to De Walton she felt herself relieved of a painful difficulty. The idea of her being discovered by the knight himself in a male disguise had preyed upon her spirits ; and she felt as if guilty of a departure from the laws of womanhood, in having extended her favour towards him beyond maidenly limits—a step, too, which might tend to lessen her in the eyes of the lover for whom she had hazarded so much.

The heart, she said, is lightly prized

That is but lightly won ;

And long shall mourn the heartless man

That leaves his love too soon.

On the other hand, to be brought before him as a prisoner was indeed a circumstance equally perplexing and displeasing, but it was one which was beyond her control, and the Douglas,

into whose hands she had fallen, appeared to her to represent the deity in the play, whose entrance was almost sufficient to bring its perplexities to a conclusion; she therefore not unwillingly submitted to take what oaths and promises were required by the party in whose hands she found herself, and accordingly engaged to be a true prisoner, whatever might occur. Meantime, she strictly obeyed the directions of those who had her motions at command, devoutly praying that circumstances, in themselves so adverse, might nevertheless work together for the safety of her lover and her own freedom.

A pause ensued, during which a slight repast was placed before the Lady Augusta, who was wellnigh exhausted with the fatigues of her journey.

Douglas and his partizans, meanwhile, whispered together, as if unwilling she should hear their conference; while, to purchase their good-will, if possible, she studiously avoided every appearance of listening.

After some conversation, Turnbull, who appeared to consider the lady as peculiarly his charge, said to her in a harsh voice, 'Do not fear, lady; no wrong shall be done you; nevertheless, you must be content for a space to be blindfolded.'

She submitted to this in silent terror; and the trooper, wrapping part of a mantle round her head, did not assist her to remount her palfrey, but lent her his arm to support her in this blinded state.

CHAPTER XVII

THE ground which they traversed was, as Lady Augusta could feel, very broken and uneven, and sometimes, as she thought, encumbered with ruins, which were difficult to surmount. The strength of her comrade assisted her forward on such occasions; but his help was so roughly administered that the lady once or twice, in fear or suffering, was compelled to groan or sigh heavily, whatever was her desire to suppress such evidence of the apprehension which she underwent, or the pain which she endured. Presently, upon an occasion of this kind, she was distinctly sensible that the rough woodsman was removed from her side, and another of the party substituted in his stead, whose voice, more gentle than that of his companion, she thought she had lately heard.

‘Noble lady,’ were the words, ‘fear not the slightest injury at our hands, and accept of my ministry instead of that of my henchman, who has gone forward with our letter; do not think me presuming on my situation if I bear you in my arms through ruins where you could not easily move alone and blindfold.’

At the same time, the Lady Augusta Berkely felt herself raised from the earth in the strong arms of a man, and borne onward with the utmost gentleness, without the necessity of making those painful exertions which had been formerly required. She was ashamed of her situation; but, however delicate, it was no time to give vent to complaints, which might have given offence to persons whom it was her interest to conciliate. She, therefore, submitted to necessity, and heard the following words whispered in her ear —

‘Fear nothing, there is no evil intended you; nor shall Sir John de Walton, if he loves you as you deserve at his hand, receive any harm on our part. We call on him but to do justice to ourselves and to you; and be assured you will best

accomplish your own happiness by aiding our views, which are equally in favour of your wishes and your freedom.'

The Lady Augusta would have made some answer to this, but her breath, betwixt fear and the speed with which she was transported, refused to permit her to use intelligible accents. Meantime, she began to be sensible that she was inclosed within some building, and probably a ruinous one; for although the mode of her transportation no longer permitted her to ascertain the nature of her path in any respect distinctly, yet the absence of the external air — which was, however, sometimes excluded and sometimes admitted in furious gusts — intimated that she was conducted through buildings partly entire, and in other places admitting the wind through wide rents and gaps. In one place it seemed to the lady as if she passed through a considerable body of people, all of whom observed silence, although there was sometimes heard among them a murmur, to which every one present in some degree contributed, although the general sound did not exceed a whisper. Her situation made her attend to every circumstance, and she did not fail to observe that these persons made way for him who bore her, until at length she became sensible that he descended by the regular steps of a stair, and that she was now alone excepting his company. Arrived, as it appeared to the lady, on more level ground, they proceeded on their singular road by a course which appeared neither direct nor easy, and through an atmosphere which was close to a smothering degree, and felt at the same time damp and disagreeable, as if from the vapours of a new-made grave.

Her guide again spoke. 'Bear up, Lady Augusta, for a little longer, and continue to endure that atmosphere which must be one day common to us all. By the necessity of my situation, I must resign my present office to your original guide, and can only give you my assurance that neither he nor any one else shall offer you the least incivility or insult, and on this you may rely, on the faith of a man of honour.'

He placed her, as he said these words, upon the soft turf, and, to her infinite refreshment, made her sensible that she was once more in the open air, and free from the smothering atmosphere which had before oppressed her like that of a charnel-house. At the same time, she breathed in a whisper an anxious wish that she might be permitted to disencumber herself from the folds of the mantle, which excluded almost the power of breathing, though intended only to prevent her

seeing by what road she travelled. She immediately found it unfolded, agreeably to her request, and hastened, with uncovered eyes, to take note of the scene around her.

It was overshadowed by thick oak-trees, among which stood some remnants of buildings, or what might have seemed such, being perhaps the same in which she had been lately wandering. A clear fountain of living water bubbled forth from under the twisted roots of one of those trees, and offered the lady the opportunity of a draught of the pure element, and in which she also bathed her face, which had received more than one scratch in the course of her journey, in spite of the care, and almost the tenderness, with which she had latterly been borne along. The cool water speedily stopt the bleeding of those trifling injuries, and the application served at the same time to recall the scattered senses of the damsel herself. Her first idea was whether an attempt to escape, if such should appear possible, was not advisable. A moment's reflection, however, satisfied her that such a scheme was not to be thought of; and such second thoughts were confirmed by the approach of the gigantic form of the huntsman Turnbull, the rough tones of whose voice were heard before his figure was obvious to her eye.

'Were you impatient for my return, fair lady? Such as I,' he continued, in an ironical tone of voice, 'who are foremost in the chase of wild stags and silvan cattle, are not in use to lag behind when fair ladies like you are the objects of pursuit; and if I am not so constant in my attendance as you might expect, believe me, it is because I was engaged in another matter, to which I must sacrifice for a little even the duty of attending on you.'

'I offer no resistance,' said the lady; 'forbear, however, in discharging thy duty, to augment my uneasiness by thy conversation, for thy master hath pledged me his word that he will not suffer me to be alarmed or ill-treated.'

'Nay, fair one,' replied the huntsman, 'I ever thought it was fit to make interest by soft words with fair ladies; but if you like it not, I have no such pleasure in hunting for fine holyday terms but that I can with equal ease hold myself silent. Come, then, since we must wait upon this lover of yours ere morning closes, and learn his last resolution touching a matter which is become so strangely complicated, I will hold no more intercourse with you as a female, but talk to you as a person of sense, although an Englishwoman.'

'You will,' replied the lady, 'best fulfil the intentions of

those by whose orders you act by holding no society with me whatever, otherwise than is necessary in the character of guide.'

The man lowered his brows, yet seemed to assent to what the Lady of Berkely proposed, and remained silent as they for some time pursued their course, each pondering over their own share of meditation, which probably turned upon matters essentially different. At length the loud blast of a bugle was heard at no great distance from the unsocial fellow-travellers. 'That is the person we seek,' said Turnbull: 'I know his blast from any other who frequents this forest, and my orders are to bring you to speech of him.'

The blood darted rapidly through the lady's veins at the thought of being thus unceremoniously presented to the knight in whose favour she had confessed a rash preference more agreeable to the manners of those times, when exaggerated sentiments often inspired actions of extravagant generosity, than in our days, when everything is accounted absurd which does not turn upon a motive connected with the immediate selfish interests of the actor himself. When Turnbull, therefore, winded his horn, as if in answer to the blast which they had heard, the lady was disposed to fly at the first impulse of shame and of fear. Turnbull perceived her intention, and caught hold of her with no very gentle grasp, saying, 'Nay, lady, it is to be understood that you play your own part in the drama, which, unless you continue on the stage, will conclude unsatisfactorily to us all, in a combat at outrance between your lover and me, when it will appear which of us is most worthy of your favour.'

'I will be patient,' said the lady, bethinking her that even this strange man's presence, and the compulsion which he appeared to use towards her, was a sort of excuse to her female scruples for coming into the presence of her lover, at least at her first appearance before him, in a disguise which her feelings confessed was not extremely decorous, or reconcilable to the dignity of her sex.

The moment after these thoughts had passed through her mind, the tramp of a horse was heard approaching; and Sir John de Walton, pressing through the trees, became aware of the presence of his lady, captive, as it seemed, in the grasp of a Scottish outlaw, who was only known to him by his former audacity at the hunting-match.

His surprise and joy only supplied the knight with these hasty expressions — 'Caitiff, let go thy hold! or die in thy profane attempt to control the motions of one whom the very sun

in heaven should be proud to obey.' At the same time, apprehensive that the huntsman might hurry the lady from his sight by means of some entangled path — such as upon a former occasion had served him for escape — Sir John de Walton dropt his cumbrous lance, of which the trees did not permit him the perfect use, and, springing from his horse, approached Turnbull with his drawn sword.

The Scotchman, keeping his left hand still upon the lady's mantle, uplifted with his right his battle-axe, or Jedwood staff, for the purpose of parrying and returning the blow of his antagonist; but the lady spoke.

'Sir John de Walton,' she said, 'for Heaven's sake, forbear all violence, till you hear upon what pacific object I am brought hither, and by what peaceful means these wars may be put an end to. This man, though an enemy of yours, has been to me a civil and respectful guardian; and I entreat you to forbear him while he speaks the purpose for which he has brought me hither.'

'To speak of compulsion and the Lady de Berkely in the same breath would itself be cause enough for instant death,' said the governor of Douglas Castle; 'but you command, lady, and I spare his insignificant life, although I have causes of complaint against him the least of which were good warrant, had he a thousand lives, for the forfeiture of them all.'

'John de Walton,' replied Turnbull, 'this lady well knows that no fear of thee operates in my mind to render this a peaceful meeting; and were I not withheld by other circumstances of great consideration to the Douglas, as well as thyself, I should have no more fear in facing the utmost thou couldst do than I have now in levelling that sapling to the earth it grows upon.'

So saying, Michael Turnbull raised his battle-axe, and struck from a neighbouring oak-tree a branch, wellnigh as thick as a man's arm, which, with all its twigs and leaves, rushed to the ground between De Walton and the Scotchman, giving a singular instance of the keenness of his weapon, and the strength and dexterity with which he used it.

'Let there be truce, then, between us, good fellow,' said Sir John de Walton, 'since it is the lady's pleasure that such should be the case, and let me know what thou hast to say to me respecting her?'

'On that subject,' said Turnbull, 'my words are few, but mark them, sir Englishman. The Lady Augusta Berkely, wandering in this country, has become a prisoner of the noble Lord Douglas, the rightful inheritor of the castle and lordship,

and he finds himself obliged to attach to the liberty of this lady the following conditions, being in all respects such as good and lawful warfare entitles a knight to exact. That is to say, in all honour and safety the Lady Augusta shall be delivered to Sir John de Walton, or those whom he shall name for the purpose of receiving her. On the other hand, the Castle of Douglas itself, together with all outposts or garrisons thereunto belonging, shall be made over and surrendered by Sir John de Walton, in the same situation, and containing the same provisions and artillery, as are now within their walls ; and the space of a month of truce shall be permitted to Sir James Douglas and Sir John de Walton farther to regulate the terms of surrender on both parts, having first plighted their knightly word and oath that in the exchange of the honourable lady for the fforesaid castle lies the full import of the present agreement, and that every other subject of dispute shall, at the pleasure of the noble knights fforesaid, be honourably compounded and agreed betwixt them ; or, at their pleasure, settled knightly by single combat, according to usage, and in a fair field, before any honourable person that may possess power enough to preside.'

It is not easy to conceive the astonishment of Sir John de Walton at hearing the contents of this extraordinary cartel ; he looked towards the Lady of Berkely with that aspect of despair with which a criminal may be supposed to see his guardian angel prepare for departure. Through her mind also similar ideas flowed, as if they contained a concession of what she had considered as the summit of her wishes, but under conditions disgraceful to her lover, like the cherub's fiery sword of yore, which was a barrier between our first parents and the blessings of Paradise.

Sir John de Walton, after a moment's hesitation, broke silence in these words : ' Noble lady, you may be surprised if a condition be imposed upon me, having for its object your freedom, and if Sir John de Walton, already standing under those obligations to you which he is proud of acknowledging, should yet hesitate on accepting, with the utmost eagerness, what must ensure your restoration to freedom and independence ; but so it is, that the words now spoken have thrilled in mine ear without reaching to my understanding, and I must pray the Lady of Berkely for pardon if I take time to reconsider them for a short space.'

' And I,' replied Turnbull, ' have only power to allow you half an hour for the consideration of an offer in accepting

which, methinks, you should jump shoulder-height, instead of asking any time for reflection. What does this cartel exact, save what your duty as a knight implicitly obliges you to? You have engaged yourself to become the agent of the tyrant Edward, in holding Douglas Castle, as his commander, to the prejudice of the Scottish nation and of the knight of Douglas Dale, who never, as a community or as an individual, were guilty of the least injury towards you; you are therefore prosecuting a false path, unworthy of a good knight. On the other hand, the freedom and safety of your lady is now proposed to be pledged to you, with a full assurance of her liberty and honour, on consideration of your withdrawing from the unjust line of conduct in which you have suffered yourself to be imprudently engaged. If you persevere in it, you place your own honour and the lady's happiness in the hands of men whom you have done everything in your power to render desperate, and whom, thus irritated, it is most probable you may find such.'

'It is not from thee at least,' said the knight, 'that I shall learn to estimate the manner in which Douglas will explain the laws of war, or De Walton receive them at his dictating.'

'I am not, then,' said Turnbull, 'received as a friendly messenger? Farewell, and think of this lady as being in any hands but those which are safe, while you make up at leisure your mind upon the message I have brought you. Come, madam, we must be gone.'

So saying, he seized upon the lady's hand, and pulled her, as if to force her to withdraw. The lady had stood motionless, and almost senseless, while these speeches were exchanged between the warriors; but when she felt the grasp of Michael Turnbull she exclaimed, like one almost beside herself with fear—'Help me, De Walton!'

The knight, stung to instant rage, assaulted the forester with the utmost fury, and dealt him with his long sword, almost at unawares, two or three heavy blows, by which he was so wounded that he sunk backwards in the thicket, and De Walton was about to despatch him when he was prevented by the anxious cry of the lady—'Alas! De Walton, what have you done? This man was only an ambassador, and should have passed free from injury, while he confined himself to the delivery of what he was charged with; and if thou hast slain him, who knows how frightful may prove the vengeance exacted!'

The voice of the lady seemed to recover the huntsman from the effects of the blows he had received : he sprung on his feet, saying, 'Never mind me, nor think of my becoming the means of making mischief. The knight, in his haste, spoke without giving me warning and defiance, which gave him an advantage which, I think, he would otherwise have scorned to have taken in such a case. I will renew the combat on fairer terms, or call another champion, as the knight pleases.' With these words he disappeared.

'Fear not, empress of De Walton's thoughts,' answered the knight, 'but believe that, if we regain together the shelter of Douglas Castle and the safeguard of St. George's cross, thou mayst laugh at all. And if you can but pardon, what I shall never be able to forgive myself, the mole-like blindness which did not recognise the sun while under a temporary eclipse, the task cannot be named too hard for mortal valour to achieve which I shall not willingly undertake to wipe out the memory of my grievous fault.'

'Mention it no more,' said the lady ; 'it is not at such a time as this, when our lives are for the moment at stake, that quarrels upon slighter topics are to be recurred to. I can tell you, if you do not yet know, that the Scots are in arms in this vicinity, and that even the earth has yawned to conceal them from the sight of your garrison.'

'Let it yawn, then,' said Sir John de Walton, 'and suffer every fiend in the infernal abyss to escape from his prison-house and reinforce our enemies ; still, fairest, having received in thee a pearl of matchless price, my spurs shall be hacked from my heels by the basest scullion if I turn my horse's head to the rear before the utmost force these ruffians can assemble, either upon earth or from underneath it. In thy name I defy them all to instant combat.'

As Sir John de Walton pronounced these last words in something of an exalted tone, a tall cavalier, arrayed in black armour of the simplest form, stepped forth from that part of the thicket where Turnbull had disappeared. 'I am,' he said, 'James of Douglas, and your challenge is accepted. I, the challenged, name the arms our knightly weapons as we now wear them, and our place of combat this field or dingle called the Bloody Sykes,¹ the time being instant, and the combatants, like true knights, foregoing each advantage on either side.'

'So be it, in God's name,' said the English knight, who,

¹ See Note 10.

though surprised at being called upon to so sudden an encounter with so formidable a warrior as young Douglas, was too proud to dream of avoiding the combat. Making a sign to the lady to retire behind him, that he might not lose the advantage which he had gained by setting her at liberty from the forester, he drew his sword, and with a deliberate and prepared attitude of offence moved slowly to the encounter. It was a dreadful one, for the courage and skill both of the native Lord of Douglas Dale and of De Walton were among the most renowned of the times, and perhaps the world of chivalry could hardly have produced two knights more famous. Their blows fell as if urged by some mighty engine, where they were met and parried with equal strength and dexterity; nor seemed it likely, in the course of ten minutes' encounter, that an advantage would be gained by either combatant over the other. An instant they stopped by mutually implied assent, as it seemed, for the purpose of taking breath, during which Douglas said, 'I beg that this noble lady may understand that her own freedom is no way concerned in the present contest, which entirely regards the injustice done by this Sir John de Walton, and by his nation of England, to the memory of my father, and to my own natural rights.'

'You are generous, sir knight,' replied the lady; 'but in what circumstances do you place me, if you deprive me of my protector by death or captivity, and leave me alone in a foreign land?'

'If such should be the event of the combat,' replied Sir James, 'the Douglas himself, lady, will safely restore thee to thy native land; for never did his sword do an injury for which he was not willing to make amends with the same weapon; and if Sir John de Walton will make the slightest admission that he renounces maintaining the present strife, were it only by yielding up a feather from the plume of his helmet, Douglas will renounce every purpose on his part which can touch the lady's honour or safety, and the combat may be suspended until the national quarrel again brings us together.'

Sir John de Walton pondered a moment, and the lady, although she did not speak, looked at him with eyes which plainly expressed how much she wished that he would choose the less hazardous alternative. But the knight's own scruples prevented his bringing the case to so favourable an arbitrement.

'Never shall it be said of Sir John de Walton,' he replied, 'that he compromised, in the slightest degree, his own honour

or that of his country. This battle may end in my defeat, or rather death, and in that case my earthly prospects are closed, and I resign to Douglas, with my last breath, the charge of the Lady Augusta, trusting that he will defend her with his life, and find the means of replacing her with safety in the halls of her fathers. But while I survive she may have a better, but will not need another, protector than he who is honoured by being her own choice; nor will I yield up, were it a plume from my helmet, implying that I have maintained an unjust quarrel, either in the cause of England or of the fairest of her daughters. Thus far alone I will concede to Douglas—an instant truce, provided the lady shall not be interrupted in her retreat to England, and the combat be fought out upon another day. The castle and territory of Douglas is the property of Edward of England, the governor in his name is the rightful governor, and on this point I will fight while my eyelids are unclosed.'

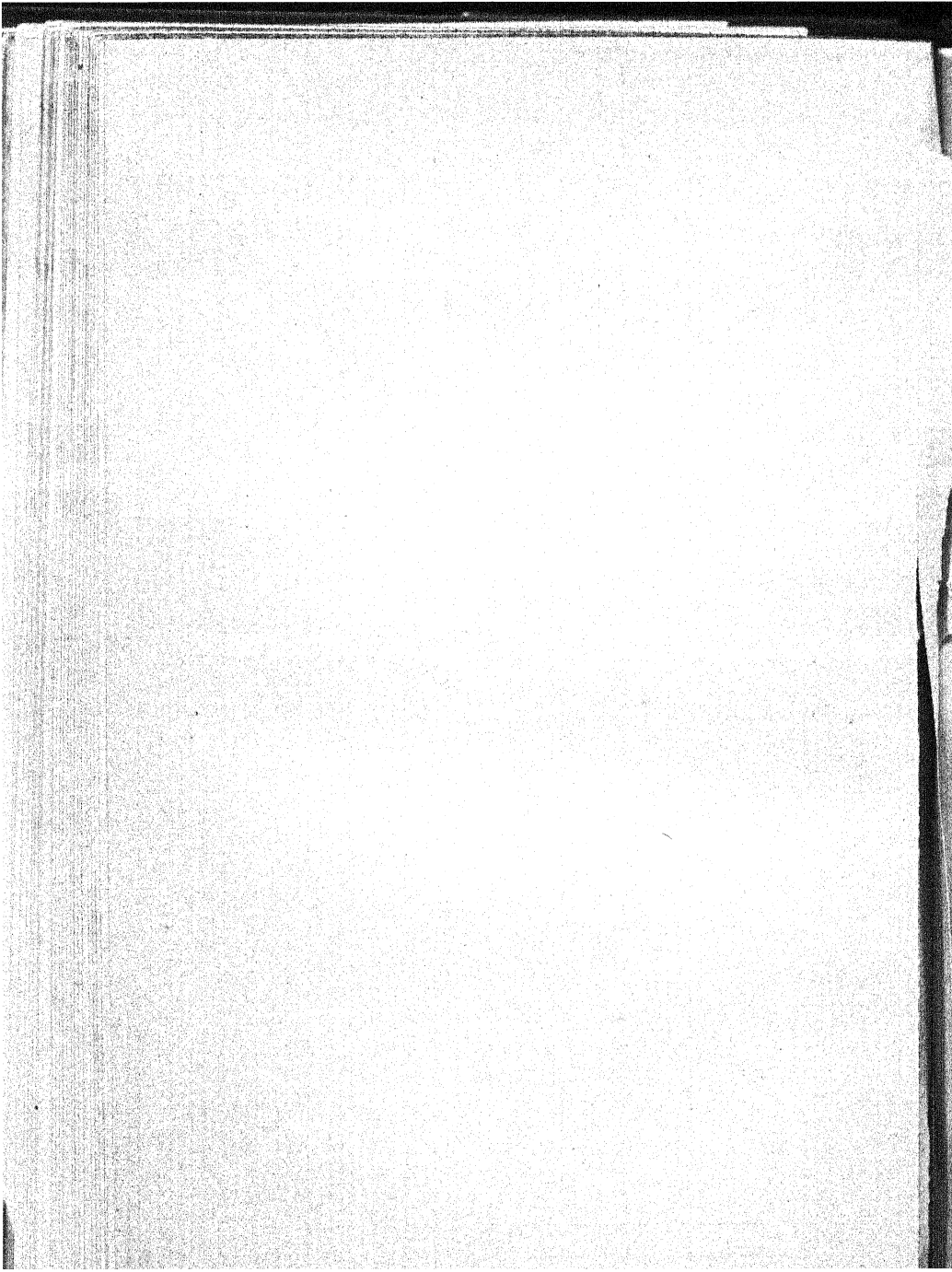
'Time flies,' said Douglas, 'without waiting for our resolves; nor is there any part of his motions of such value as that which is passing with every breath of vital air which we presently draw. Why should we adjourn till to-morrow that which can be as well finished to-day? Will our swords be sharper or our arms stronger to wield them than they are at this moment? Douglas will do all which knight can do to succour a lady in distress; but he will not grant to her knight the slightest mark of deference, which Sir John de Walton vainly supposes himself able to extort by force of arms.'

With these words, the knights engaged once more in mortal combat, and the lady felt uncertain whether she should attempt her escape through the devious paths of the wood or abide the issue of this obstinate fight. It was rather her desire to see the fate of Sir John de Walton than any other consideration which induced her to remain, as if fascinated, upon the spot, where one of the fiercest quarrels ever fought was disputed by two of the bravest champions that ever drew sword. At last the lady attempted to put a stop to the combat by appealing to the bells which began to ring for the service of the day, which was Palm Sunday.

'For Heaven's sake,' she said, 'for your own sakes, and for that of lady's love, and the duties of chivalry, hold your hands only for an hour, and take chance that, where strength is so equal, means will be found of converting the truce into a solid peace. Think, this is Palm Sunday, and will you defile with



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LADY AUGUSTA SECURES A TRUCE BETWEEN SIR JOHN DE WALTON



blood such a peculiar festival of Christianity? Intermit your feud at least so far as to pass to the nearest church, bearing with you branches, not in the ostentatious mode of earthly conquerors, but as rendering due homage to the rules of the blessed church and the institutions of our holy religion.'

'I was on my road, fair lady, for that purpose, to the holy church of Douglas,' said the Englishman, 'when I was so fortunate as to meet you at this place; nor do I object to proceed thither even now, holding truce for an hour, and I fear not to find there friends to whom I can commit you with assurance of safety, in case I am unfortunate in the combat which is now broken off, to be resumed after the service of the day.'

'I also assent,' said the Douglas, 'to a truce for such short space; nor do I fear that there may be good Christians enough at the church who will not see their master overpowered by odds. Let us go thither, and each take the chance of what Heaven shall please to send us.'

From these words, Sir John de Walton little doubted that Douglas had assured himself of a party among those who should there assemble; but he doubted not of so many of the garrison being present as would bridle every attempt at rising; and the risk, he thought, was worth incurring, since he should thereby secure an opportunity to place Lady Augusta de Berkely in safety, at least so far as to make her liberty depend on the event of a general conflict, instead of the precarious issue of a combat between himself and Douglas.

Both these distinguished knights were inwardly of opinion that the proposal of the lady, though it relieved them from their present conflict, by no means bound them to abstain from the consequences which an accession of force might add to their general strength, and each relied upon his superiority, in some degree provided for by their previous proceedings. Sir John de Walton made almost certain of meeting with several of his bands of soldiers, who were scouring the country and traversing the woods by his direction; and Douglas, it may be supposed, had not ventured himself in person where a price was set upon his head without being attended by a sufficient number of approved adherents, placed in more or less connexion with each other, and stationed for mutual support. Each, therefore, entertained well-grounded hopes that, by adopting the truce proposed, he would ensure himself an advantage over his antagonist, although neither exactly knew in what manner or to what extent this success was to be obtained.

CHAPTER XVIII

His talk was of another world — his bodements
Strange, doubtful, and mysterious ; those who heard him
Listen'd as to a man in feverish dreams,
Who speaks of other objects than the present,
And mutters like to him who sees a vision.

Old Play.

ON the same Palm Sunday when De Walton and Douglas measured together their mighty swords, the minstrel Bertram was busied with the ancient book of prophecies, which we have already mentioned as the supposed composition of Thomas the Rhymer, but not without many anxieties as to the fate of his lady, and the events which were passing around him. As a minstrel, he was desirous of an auditor to enter into the discoveries which he should make in that mystic volume, as well as to assist in passing away the time ; Sir John de Walton had furnished him, in Gilbert Greenleaf the archer, with one who was well contented to play the listener 'from morn to dewy eve,' provided a flask of Gascon wine, or a stoup of good English ale, remained on the board. It may be remembered that De Walton, when he dismissed the minstrel from the dungeon, was sensible that he owed him some compensation for the causeless suspicion which had dictated his imprisonment, more particularly as he was a valued servant, and had shown himself the faithful confidant of the Lady Augusta de Berkely, and the person who was moreover likely to know all the motives and circumstances of her Scottish journey. To secure his good wishes was, therefore, politic ; and De Walton had intimated to his faithful archer that he was to lay aside all suspicion of Bertram, but at the same time keep him in sight, and, if possible, in good humour with the governor of the castle and his adherents. Greenleaf, accordingly, had no doubt in his own mind that the only way to please a minstrel was to listen with patience and commendation to the lays which he liked best to

sing, or the tales which he most loved to tell ; and in order to ensure the execution of his master's commands, he judged it necessary to demand of the butler such store of good liquor as could not fail to enhance the pleasure of his society.

Having thus fortified himself with the means of bearing a long interview with the minstrel, Gilbert Greenleaf proposed to confer upon him the bounty of an early breakfast, which, if it pleased him, they might wash down with a cup of sack, and, having his master's commands to show the minstrel anything about the castle which he might wish to see, refresh their over-wearied spirits by attending a part of the garrison of Douglas to the service of the day, which, as we have already seen, was of peculiar sanctity. Against such a proposal the minstrel, a good Christian by profession, and, by his connexion with the joyous science, a good fellow, having no objections to offer, the two comrades, who had formerly little good-will towards each other, commenced their morning's repast on that fated Palm Sunday with all manner of cordiality and good fellowship.

'Do not believe, worthy minstrel,' said the archer, 'that my master in any respect disparages your worth or rank in referring you for company or conversation to so poor a man as myself. It is true, I am no officer of this garrison ; yet for an old archer, who for these thirty years has lived by bow and bowstring, I do not — Our Lady make me thankful ! — hold less share in the grace of Sir John de Walton, the Earl of Pembroke, and other approved good soldiers, than many of those giddy young men on whom commissions are conferred, and to whom confidences are entrusted, not on account of what they have done, but what their ancestors have done before them. I pray you to notice among them one youth placed at our head in De Walton's absence, and who bears the honoured name of Aymer de Valence, being the same with that of the Earl of Pembroke, of whom I have spoken ; this knight has also a brisk young page, whom men call Fabian Harbothel.'

'Is it to these gentlemen that your censure applies ?' answered the minstrel. 'I should have judged differently, having never, in the course of my experience, seen a young man more courteous and amiable than the young knight you named.'

'I nothing dispute that it may be so,' said the archer, hastening to amend the false step which he had made ; 'but in order that it should be so, it will be necessary that he conform to the usages of his uncle, taking the advice of experienced old

soldiers in the emergencies which may present themselves ; and not believing that the knowledge which it takes many years of observation to acquire can be at once conferred by the slap of the flat of a sword, and the magic words, "Rise up, Sir Arthur," or however the case may be.'

'Doubt not, sir archer,' replied Bertram, 'that I am fully aware of the advantage to be derived from conversing with men of experience like you : it benefiteth men of every persuasion, and I myself am oft reduced to lament my want of sufficient knowledge of armorial bearings, signs, and cognizances, and would right fain have thy assistance, where I am a stranger alike to the names of places, of persons, and description of banners and emblems by which great families are distinguished from each other, so absolutely necessary to the accomplishment of my present task.'

'Pennons and banners,' answered the archer, 'I have seen right many, and can assign, as is a soldier's wont, the name of the leader to the emblem under which he musters his followers ; nevertheless, worthy minstrel, I cannot presume to understand what you call prophecies, with or under warranted authority of old painted books, expositions of dreams, oracles, revelations, invocations of damned spirits, judicials, astrologicals, and other gross and palpable offences, whereby men, pretending to have the assistance of the Devil, do impose upon the common people, in spite of the warnings of the privy council ; not, however, that I suspect you, worthy minstrel, of busying yourself with these attempts to explain futurity, which are dangerous attempts, and may be truly said to be penal, and part of treason.'

'There is something in what you say,' replied the minstrel ; 'yet it applieth not to books and manuscripts such as I have been consulting ; part of which things, therein written, having already come to pass authorise us surely to expect the completion of the rest ; nor would I have much difficulty in showing you from this volume that enough has been already proved true to entitle us to look with certainty to the accomplishment of that which remains.'

'I should be glad to hear that,' answered the archer, who entertained little more than a soldier's belief respecting prophecies and auguries, but yet cared not bluntly to contradict the minstrel upon such subjects, as he had been instructed by Sir John de Walton to comply with his humour.

Accordingly the minstrel began to recite verses which, in our time, the ablest interpreter could not make sense out of.

'When the cock crows, keep well his comb,
For the fox and the fulmart they are false both.
When the raven and the rook have rounded together,
And the kid in his cliff shall accord to the same,
Then shall they be bold, and soon to battle thereafter.
Then the birds of the raven rugs and reives,
And the leal men of Lothian are loupin on their horse ;
Then shall the poor people be spoiled full near,
And the abbeyes be burnt truly that stand upon Tweed ;
They shall burn and slay, and great reif make ;
There shall no poor man who say whose man he is :
Then shall the land be lawless, for love there is none.
Then falsen shall have foot fully five years ;
Then truth surely shall be tint, and none shall lippen to other ;
The one couping shall not trust the other,
Not the son the father, nor the father the son ;
For to have his goods he would have him hanged.'

The archer listened to these mystic prognostications, which were not the less wearisome that they were, in a considerable degree, unintelligible ; at the same time subduing his Hotspur-like disposition to tire of the recitation, yet at brief intervals comforting himself with an application to the wine flagon, and enduring as he might what he neither understood nor took interest in. Meanwhile the minstrel proceeded with his explanation of the dubious and imperfect vaticinations of which we have given a sufficient specimen.

'Could you wish,' said he to Greenleaf, 'a more exact description of the miseries which have passed over Scotland in these latter days ? Have not these the raven and rook, the fox and the fulmart, explained ; either because the nature of the birds or beasts bear an individual resemblance to those of the knights who display them on their banners, or otherwise are bodied forth by actual blazonry on their shields, and come openly into the field to ravage and destroy ? Is not the total disunion of the land plainly indicated by these words, that connexions of blood shall be broken asunder, that kinsmen shall not trust each other, and that the father and son, instead of putting faith in their natural connexion, shall seek each other's life, in order to enjoy his inheritance ? The leal men of Lothian are distinctly mentioned as taking arms, and there is plainly allusion to the other events of these late Scottish troubles. The death of this last William is obscurely intimated under the type of a hound, which was that good lord's occasional cognizance.

The hound that was harmed then muzzled shall be,
Who loved him worst shall weep for his wreck ;

Yet shall a whelp rise of the same race,
That rudely shall roar, and rule the whole north,
And quit the whole quarrel of old deeds done,
Though he from his hold be kept back a while.
True Thomas told me this in a troublesome time,
In a harvest morning at Eldoun Hills.

This hath a meaning, sir archer,' continued the minstrel, 'and which flies as directly to its mark as one of your own arrows, although there may be some want of wisdom in making the direct explication. Being, however, upon assurance with you, I do not hesitate to tell you that in my opinion this lion's whelp that waits its time means this same celebrated Scottish prince, Robert the Bruce, who, though repeatedly defeated, has still, while hunted with bloodhounds and surrounded by enemies of every sort, maintained his pretensions to the crown of Scotland in despite of King Edward, now reigning.'

'Minstrel,' answered the soldier, 'you are my guest, and we have sat down together as friends to this simple meal in good comradeship. I must tell thee, however, though I am loth to disturb our harmony, that thou art the first who hast adventured to speak a word before Gilbert Greenleaf in favour of that outlawed traitor, Robert Bruce, who has by his seditious so long disturbed the peace of this realm. Take my advice, and be silent on this topic; for, believe me, the sword of a true English archer will spring from its scabbard without consent of its master should it hear aught said to the disparagement of bonny St. George and his ruddy cross; nor shall the authority of Thomas the Rhymer, or any other prophet in Scotland, England, or Wales, be considered as an apology for such unbecoming predictions.'

'I were loth to give offence at any time,' said the minstrel, 'much more to provoke you to anger, when I am in the very act of experiencing your hospitality. I trust, however, you will remember that I do not come your uninvited guest, and that, if I speak to you of future events, I do so without having the least intention to add my endeavour to bring them to pass; for, God knows, it is many years since my sincere prayer has been for peace and happiness to all men, and particularly honour and happiness to the land of bowmen, in which I was born, and which I am bound to remember in my prayers beyond all other nations in the world.'

'It is well that you do so,' said the archer; 'for so you shall best maintain your bounden duty to the fair land of your

birth, which is the richest that the sun shines upon. Something, however, I would know, if it suits with your pleasure to tell me, and that is, whether you find anything in these rude rhymes appearing to affect the safety of the Castle of Douglas, where we now are? for, mark me, sir minstrel, I have observed that these mouldering parchments, when or by whomsoever composed, have so far a certain coincidence with the truth, that when such predictions which they contain are spread abroad in the country, and create rumours of plots, conspiracies, and bloody wars, they are very apt to cause the very mischances which they would be thought only to predict.

'It were not very cautious in me,' said the minstrel, 'to choose a prophecy for my theme which had reference to any attack on this garrison; for in such case I should, according to your ideas, lay myself under suspicion of endeavouring to forward what no person could more heartily regret than myself.'

'Take my word for it, good friend,' said the archer, 'that it shall not be thus with thee; for I neither will myself conceive ill of thee nor report thee to Sir John de Walton as meditating harm against him or his garrison; nor, to speak truth, would Sir John de Walton be willing to believe any one who did. He thinks highly, and no doubt deservedly, of thy good faith towards thy lady, and would conceive it unjust to suspect the fidelity of one who has given evidence of his willingness to meet death rather than betray the least secret of his mistress.'

'In preserving her secret,' said Bertram, 'I only discharged the duty of a faithful servant, leaving it to her to judge how long such a secret ought to be preserved; for a faithful servant ought to think as little of the issue towards himself of the commission which he bears as the band of flock-silk concerns itself with the secret of the letter which it secures. And touching your question, I have no objections, although merely to satisfy your curiosity, to unfold to you that these old prophecies do contain some intimations of wars befalling in Douglas Dale between an haggard, or wild hawk, which I take to be the cognizance of Sir John de Walton, and the three stars, or martlets, which is the cognizance of the Douglas; and more particulars I could tell of these onslaughts, did I know whereabouts is a place in these woods termed Bloody Sykes, the scene also, as I comprehend, of slaughter and death between the followers of the three stars and those who hold the part of the Saxon, or King of England.'

'Such a place,' replied Gilbert Greenleaf, 'I have heard often mentioned by that name among the natives of these parts; nevertheless, it is in vain to seek to discover the precise spot, as these wily Scots conceal from us with care everything respecting the geography of their country, as it is called by learned men; but we may here mention the Bloody Sykes, Bottomless Myre, and other places as portentous names, to which their traditions attach some signification of war and slaughter. If it suits your wish, however, we can, on our way to the church, try to find this place called Bloody Sykes, which I doubt not we shall trace out long before the traitors who meditate an attack upon us will find a power sufficient for the attempt.'

Accordingly, the minstrel and archer, the latter of whom was by this time reasonably well refreshed with wine, marched out of the Castle of Douglas, without waiting for others of the garrison, resolving to seek the dingle bearing the ominous name of Bloody Sykes, concerning which the archer only knew that by mere accident he had heard of a place bearing such a name, at the hunting-match made under the auspices of Sir John de Walton, and knew that it lay in the woods somewhere near the town of Douglas, and in the vicinage of the castle.

CHAPTER XIX

Hotspur. I cannot choose; sometimes he angers me
With telling me of the moldwarp and the ant,
Of the dreamer Merlin, and his prophecies,
And of a dragon and a finless fish,
A clipt-wing'd griffin and a moulten raven,
A couching lion, and a ramping cat,
And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff
As puts me from my faith.

King Henry IV.

THE conversation between the minstrel and the ancient archer naturally pursued a train somewhat resembling that of Hotspur and Glendower, in which Gilbert Greenleaf by degrees took a larger share than was apparently consistent with his habits and education; but the truth was that, as he exerted himself to recall the recognizances of military chieftains, their war-cries, emblems, and other types by which they distinguished themselves in battle, and might undoubtedly be indicated in prophetic rhymes, he began to experience the pleasure which most men entertain when they find themselves unexpectedly possessed of a faculty which the moment calls upon them to employ, and renders them important in the possession of. The minstrel's sound good sense was certainly somewhat surprised at the inconsistencies sometimes displayed by his companion, as he was carried off by the willingness to make show of his newly-discovered faculty on the one hand, and, on the other, to call to mind the prejudices which he had nourished during his whole life against minstrels, who, with the train of legends and fables, were the more likely to be false, as being generally derived from the 'North Countrie.'

As they strolled from one glade of the forest to another, the minstrel began to be surprised at the number of Scottish votaries whom they met, and who seemed to be hastening to the church, and, as it appeared by the boughs which they carried, to assist in the ceremony of the day. To each of these the archer put

a question respecting the existence of a place called Bloody Sykes, and where it was to be found ; but all seemed either to be ignorant on the subject or desirous of evading it, for which they found some pretext in the jolly archer's manner of interrogation, which savoured a good deal of the genial breakfast. The general answer was, that they knew no such place, or had other matters to attend to upon the morn of a holy-tide than answering frivolous questions. At last, when, in one or two instances, the answer of the Scottish almost approached to sullenness, the minstrel remarked it, observing, that there was ever some mischief on foot when the people of this country could not find a civil answer to their betters, which is usually so ready among them, and that they appeared to be making a strong muster for the service of Palm Sunday.

'You will doubtless, sir archer,' continued the minstrel, 'make your report to your knight accordingly ; for I promise you that, if you do not, I myself, whose lady's freedom is also concerned, will feel it my duty to place before Sir John de Walton the circumstances which make me entertain suspicion of this extraordinary confluence of Scottish men, and the surliness which has replaced their wonted courtesy of manners.'

'Tush, sir minstrel,' replied the archer, displeased at Bertram's interference, 'believe me, that armies have ere now depended on my report to the general, which has always been perspicuous and clear, according to the duties of war. Your walk, my worthy friend, has been in a separate department, such as affairs of peace, old songs, prophecies, and the like, in which it is far from my thoughts to contend with you ; but credit me, it will be most for the reputation of both that we do not attempt to interfere with what concerns each other.'

'It is far from my wish to do so,' replied the minstrel ; 'but I would wish that a speedy return should be made to the castle, in order to ask Sir John de Walton's opinion of that which we have but just seen.'

'To this,' replied Greenleaf, 'there can be no objection ; but, would you seek the governor at the hour which now is, you will find him most readily by going to the church of Douglas, to which he regularly wends on occasions such as the present, with the principal part of his officers, to ensure by his presence that no tumult arise — of which there is no little dread — between the English and the Scottish. Let us therefore hold to our original intention of attending the service of the day,

and we shall rid ourselves of these entangled woods, and gain the shortest road to the church of Douglas.'

'Let us go then with all despatch,' said the minstrel; 'and with the greater haste, that it appears to me that something has passed on this very spot this morning which argues that the Christian peace due to the day has not been inviolably observed. What mean these drops of blood?' alluding to those which had flowed from the wounds of Turnbull. 'Wherefore is the earth impressed with these deep dints, the footsteps of armed men advancing and retreating, doubtless, according to the chances of a fierce and heady conflict?'

'By Our Lady,' returned Greenleaf, 'I must own that thou seest clear. What were my eyes made of when they permitted thee to be the first discoverer of these signs of conflict? Here are feathers of a blue plume, which I ought to remember, seeing my knight assumed it, or at least permitted me to place it in his helmet, this morning, in sign of returning hope, from the liveliness of its colour. But here it lies, shorn from his head, and, if I may guess, by no friendly hand. Come, friend, to the church—to the church, and thou shalt have my example of the manner in which De Walton ought to be supported when in danger.'

He led the way through the town of Douglas, entering at the southern gate, and up the very street in which Sir Aymer de Valence had charged the Phantom Knight.

We can now say more fully that the church of Douglas had originally been a stately Gothic building, whose towers, arising high above the walls of the town, bore witness to the grandeur of its original construction. It was now partly ruinous, and the small portion of open space which was retained for public worship was fitted up in the family aisle, where its deceased lords rested from worldly labours and the strife of war. From the open ground in the front of the building their eye could pursue a considerable part of the course of the river Douglas, which approached the town from the south-west, bordered by a line of hills fantastically diversified in their appearance, and in many places covered with copsewood, which descended towards the valley, and formed a part of the tangled and intricate woodland by which the town was surrounded. The river itself, sweeping round the west side of the town, and from thence northward, supplied that large inundation or artificial piece of water which we have already mentioned. Several of the Scottish people, bearing willow branches, or those of yew, to

represent the palms which were the symbol of the day, seemed wandering in the churchyard as if to attend the approach of some person of peculiar sanctity, or procession of monks and friars, come to render the homage due to the solemnity. At the moment almost that Bertram and his companion entered the churchyard, the Lady of Berkely, who was in the act of following Sir John de Walton into the church, after having witnessed his conflict with the young knight of Douglas, caught a glimpse of her faithful minstrel, and instantly determined to regain the company of that old servant of her house and confidant of her fortunes, and trust to the chance afterwards of being rejoined by Sir John de Walton, with a sufficient party to provide for her safety, which she in no respect doubted it would be his care to collect. She darted away accordingly from the path in which she was advancing, and reached the place where Bertram, with his new acquaintance Greenleaf, were making some inquiries of the soldiers of the English garrison, whom the service of the day had brought there.

Lady Augusta Berkely, in the meantime, had an opportunity to say privately to her faithful attendant and guide, 'Take no notice of me, friend Bertram, but take heed, if possible, that we be not again separated from each other.' Having given him this hint, she observed that it was adopted by the minstrel, and that he presently afterwards looked round and set his eye upon her, as, muffled in her pilgrim's cloak, she slowly withdrew to another part of the cemetery, and seemed to halt until, detaching himself from Greenleaf, he should find an opportunity of joining her.

Nothing, in truth, could have more sensibly affected the faithful minstrel than the singular mode of communication which acquainted him that his mistress was safe, and at liberty to choose her own motions, and, as he might hope, disposed to extricate herself from the dangers which surrounded her in Scotland, by an immediate retreat to her own country and domain. He would gladly have approached and joined her, but she took an opportunity by a sign to caution him against doing so, while at the same time he remained somewhat apprehensive of the consequences of bringing her under the notice of his new friend, Greenleaf, who might perhaps think it proper to busy himself so as to gain some favour with the knight who was at the head of the garrison. Meantime the old archer continued his conversation with Bertram, while the minstrel, like many other men similarly situated, heartily wished that his

well-meaning companion had been a hundred fathoms under ground, so his evanishment had given him license to join his mistress; but all he had in his power was to approach her as near as he could without creating any suspicion.

'I would pray you, worthy minstrel,' said Greenleaf, after looking carefully round, 'that we may prosecute together the theme which we were agitating before we came hither: is it not your opinion that the Scottish natives have fixed this very morning for some of those dangerous attempts which they have repeatedly made, and which are so carefully guarded against by the governors placed in this district of Douglas by our good King Edward, our rightful sovereign?'

'I cannot see,' replied the minstrel, 'on what grounds you found such an apprehension, or what you see here in the churchyard different from that you talked of as we approached it, when you held me rather in scorn for giving way to some suspicions of the same kind.'

'Do you not see,' added the archer, 'the numbers of men with strange faces, and in various disguisements, who are thronging about these ancient ruins, which are usually so solitary? Yonder, for example, sits a boy, who seems to shun observation, and whose dress, I will be sworn, has never been shaped in Scotland.'

'And if he is an English pilgrim,' replied the minstrel, observing that the archer pointed towards the Lady of Berkely, 'he surely affords less matter of suspicion.'

'I know not that,' said old Greenleaf, 'but I think it will be my duty to inform Sir John de Walton, if I can reach him, that there are many persons here who in outward appearance neither belong to the garrison nor to this part of the country.'

'Consider,' said Bertram, 'before you harass with accusation a poor young man, and subject him to the consequences which must necessarily attend upon suspicions of this nature, how many circumstances call forth men peculiarly to devotion at this period. Not only is this the time of the triumphal entrance of the Founder of the Christian religion into Jerusalem, but the day itself is called *Dominica Confitentium*, or the Sunday of Confessors, and the palm-tree, or the box and yew, which are used as its substitutes, and which are distributed to the priests, are burnt solemnly to ashes, and those ashes distributed among the pious by the priests upon the Ash Wednesday of the succeeding year — all which rites and cere-

monies in our country are observed by order of the Christian Church ; nor ought you, gentle archer, nor can you without a crime, persecute those as guilty of designs upon your garrison who can ascribe their presence here to their desire to discharge the duties of the day ; and look ye at yon numerous procession approaching with banner and cross, and, as it appears, consisting of some churchman of rank and his attendants ; let us first inquire who he is, and it is probable we shall find in his name and rank sufficient security for the peaceable and orderly behaviour of those whom piety has this day assembled at the church of Douglas.'

Greenleaf accordingly made the investigation recommended by his companion, and received information that the holy man who headed the procession was no other than the diocesan of the district, the Bishop of Glasgow, who had come to give his countenance to the rites with which the day was to be sanctified.

The prelate accordingly entered the walls of the dilapidated churchyard, preceded by his cross-bearers, and attended by numbers, with boughs of yew and other evergreens, used on the festivity instead of palms. Among them the holy father showered his blessing, accompanied by signs of the cross, which were met with devout exclamations by such of the worshippers as crowded around him — 'To thee, reverend father, we apply for pardon for our offences, which we humbly desire to confess to thee, in order that we may obtain pardon from Heaven.'

In this manner the congregation and the dignified clergyman met together, exchanging pious greeting, and seemingly intent upon nothing but the rites of the day. The acclamations of the congregation mingled with the deep voice of the officiating priest, dispensing the sacred ritual, the whole forming a scene which, conducted with the Catholic skill and ceremonial, was at once imposing and affecting.

The archer, on seeing the zeal with which the people in the churchyard, as well as a number who issued from the church, hastened proudly to salute the bishop of the diocese, was rather ashamed of the suspicions which he had entertained of the sincerity of the good man's purpose in coming hither. Taking advantage of a fit of devotion, not perhaps very common with old Greenleaf, who at this moment thrust himself forward to share in those spiritual advantages which the prelate was dispensing, Bertram slipped clear of his English friend, and,

gliding to the side of the Lady Augusta, exchanged, by the pressure of the hand, a mutual congratulation upon having rejoined company. On a sign by the minstrel, they withdrew to the inside of the church, so as to remain unobserved amidst the crowd, in which they were favoured by the dark shadows of some parts of the building.

The body of the church, broken as it was, and hung round with the armorial trophies of the last Lords of Douglas, furnished rather the appearance of a sacrilegiously desecrated ruin than the inside of a holy place; yet some care appeared to have been taken to prepare it for the service of the day. At the lower end hung the great escutcheon of William Lord of Douglas, who had lately died a prisoner in England; around that escutcheon were placed the smaller shields of his sixteen ancestors, and a deep black shadow was diffused by the whole mass, unless where relieved by the glance of the coronets or the glimmer of bearings particularly gay in emblazonry. I need not say that in other respects the interior of the church was much dismantled; it being the very same place in which Sir Aymer de Valence held an interview with the old sexton, and who now, drawing into a separate corner some of the straggling parties whom he had collected and brought to the church, kept on the alert, and appeared ready for an attack as well at mid-day as at the witching hour of midnight. This was the more necessary, as the eye of Sir John de Walton seemed busied in searching from one place to another, as if unable to find the object he was in quest of, which the reader will easily understand to be the Lady Augusta de Berkely, of whom he had lost sight in the pressure of the multitude. At the eastern part of the church was fitted up a temporary altar, by the side of which, arrayed in his robes, the Bishop of Glasgow had taken his place, with such priests and attendants as composed his episcopal retinue. His suite was neither numerous nor richly attired, nor did his own appearance present a splendid specimen of the wealth and dignity of the episcopal order. When he laid down, however, his golden cross, at the stern command of the King of England, that of simple wood, which he assumed instead thereof, did not possess less authority nor command less awe among the clergy and people of the diocese.

The various persons, natives of Scotland, now gathered around seemed to watch his motions, as those of a descended saint, and the English waited in mute astonishment, apprehen-

credit by me, whether in pursuit or in bringing to bay; and even in this last matter, methinks this gay English knight would not have come off with such advantage had the ground on which we stood been alike indifferent to both, or had I been aware of his onset; but it will be seen, by any one who takes the trouble to examine, that poor Michael Turnbull's foot slipped twice in the *mêlée*, otherwise it had not been his fate to be lying here in the dead-thraw;¹ while yonder Southron would probably have died like a dog upon this bloody straw in his place.'

The bishop replied, advising his penitent to turn from vindictive thoughts respecting the death of others, and endeavour to fix his attention upon his own departure from existence, which seemed shortly about to take place.

'Nay,' replied the wounded man, 'you, father, undoubtedly know best what is fit for me to do; yet methinks it would not be very well with me if I had prolonged to this time of day the task of revising my life, and I am not the man to deny that mine has been a bloody and a desperate one. But you will grant me I never bore malice to a brave enemy for having done me an injury, and show me the man, being a Scotchman born and having a natural love for his own country, who hath not, in these times, rather preferred a steel cap to a hat and feather, or who hath not been more conversant with drawn blades than with prayer-book; and you yourself know, father, whether, in our proceedings against the English interest, we have not uniformly had the countenance of the sincere fathers of the Scottish Church, and whether we have not been exhorted to take arms and make use of them for the honour of the King of Scotland and the defence of our own rights.'

'Undoubtedly,' said the prelate, 'such have been our exhortations towards our oppressed countrymen, nor do I now teach you a different doctrine; nevertheless, having now blood around me, and a dying man before me, I have need to pray that I have not been misled from the true path, and thus become the means of misdirecting others. May Heaven forgive me if I have done so, since I have only to plead my sincere and honest intention in excuse for the erroneous counsel which I may have given to you and others touching these wars. I am conscious that, encouraging you so to stain your swords in blood, I have departed in some degree from the character of my profession, which enjoins that we neither shed blood nor are the

¹ Or death agony.

occasion of its being shed. May Heaven enable us to obey our duties and to repent of our errors, especially such as have occasioned the death or distress of our fellow-creatures ! And, above all, may this dying Christian become aware of his errors, and repent with sincerity of having done to others that which he would not willingly have suffered at their hand !'

'For that matter,' answered Turnbull, 'the time has never been when I would not exchange a blow with the best man who ever lived ; and if I was not in constant practice of the sword, it was because I have been brought up to the use of the Jedwood-axe, which the English call a partizan, and which makes little difference, I understand, from the sword and poniard.'

'The distinction is not great,' said the bishop ; 'but I fear, my friend, that life taken with what you call a Jedwood-axe gives you no privilege over him who commits the same deed, and inflicts the same injury, with any other weapon.'

'Nay, worthy father,' said the penitent, 'I must own that the effect of the weapons is the same as far as concerns the man who suffers ; but I would pray of you information, why a Jedwood man ought not to use, as is the custom of his country, a Jedwood-axe, being, as is implied in the name, the offensive weapon proper to his country ?'

'The crime of murder,' said the bishop, 'consists not in the weapon with which the crime is inflicted, but in the pain which the murderer inflicts upon his fellow-creature, and the breach of good order which he introduces into Heaven's lovely and peaceable creation ; and it is by turning your repentance upon this crime that you may fairly expect to propitiate Heaven for your offences, and at the same time to escape the consequences which are denounced in Holy Writ against those by whom man's blood shall be shed.'

'But, good father,' said the wounded man, 'you know as well as any one that in this company, and in this very church, there are upon the watch scores of both Scotchmen and Englishmen, who come here not so much to discharge the religious duties of the day as literally to bereave each other of their lives, and give a new example of the horror of those feuds which the two extremities of Britain nourish against each other. What conduct, then, is a poor man like me to hold ? Am I not to raise this hand against the English, which methinks I still can make a tolerably efficient one ; or am I, for the first time in my life, to hear the war-cry when it is raised, and hold

back my sword from the slaughter? Methinks it will be difficult, perhaps altogether impossible, for me to do so; but if such is the pleasure of Heaven, and your advice, most reverend father, unquestionably I must do my best to be governed by your directions, as of one who has a right and title to direct us in every dilemma, or case, as they term it, of troubled conscience.

'Unquestionably,' said the bishop, 'it is my duty, as I have already said, to give no occasion this day for the shedding of blood or the breach of peace; and I must charge you, as my penitent, that, upon your soul's safety, you do not minister any occasion to affray or bloodshed, either by maintaining such in your own person or inciting others to the same; for, by following a different course of advice, I am certain that you, as well as myself, would act sinfully and out of character.'

'So I will endeavour to think, reverend father,' answered the huntsman; 'nevertheless, I hope it will be remembered in my favour that I am the first person bearing the surname of Turnbull, together with the proper name of the Prince of Archangels himself, who has at any time been able to sustain the affront occasioned by the presence of a Southron with a drawn sword, and was not thereby provoked to pluck forth his own weapon and to lay about him.'

'Take care, my son,' returned the prelate of Glasgow, 'and observe that even now thou art departing from those resolutions which, but a few minutes since, thou didst adopt upon serious and just consideration; wherefore do not be, O my son! like the sow that has wallowed in the mire, and, having been washed, repeats its act of pollution, and becomes again yet fouler than it was before.'

'Well, reverend father,' replied the wounded man, 'although it seems almost unnatural for Scottish men and English to meet and part without a buffet, yet I will endeavour most faithfully not to minister any occasion of strife, nor, if possible, to snatch at any such occasion as shall be ministered to me.'

'In doing so,' returned the bishop, 'thou wilt best atone for the injury which thou hast done to the law of Heaven upon former occasions, and thou shalt prevent the causes for strife betwixt thee and thy brethren of the southern land, and shalt eschew the temptation towards that bloodguiltiness which is so rife in this our day and generation. And do not think that I am imposing upon thee, by these admonitions, a duty more difficult than it is in thy covenant to bear, as a man and as a

Christian. I myself am a man, and a Scotchman, and, as such, I feel offended at the unjust conduct of the English towards our country and sovereign; and thinking as you do yourself, I know what you must suffer when you are obliged to submit to national insults, unretaliated and unrevenged. But let us not conceive ourselves the agents of that retributive vengeance which Heaven has, in a peculiar degree, declared to be its own attribute. Let us, while we see and feel the injuries inflicted on our own country, not forget that our own raids, ambuscades, and surprisals have been at least equally fatal to the English as their attacks and forays have been to us; and, in short, let the mutual injuries of the crosses of St. Andrew and of St. George be no longer considered as hostile to the inhabitants of the opposite district, at least during the festivals of religion; but, as they are mutually signs of redemption, let them be, in like manner, intimations of forbearance and peace on both sides.'

'I am contented,' answered Turnbull, 'to abstain from all offences towards others, and shall even endeavour to keep myself from resenting those of others towards me, in the hope of bringing to pass such a quiet and godly state of things as your words, reverend father, induce me to expect.' Turning his face to the wall, the Borderer lay in stern expectation of approaching death, which the bishop left him to contemplate.

The peaceful disposition which the prelate had inspired into Michael Turnbull had in some degree diffused itself among those present, who heard with awe the spiritual admonition to suspend the national antipathy, and remain in truce and amity with each other. Heaven had, however, decreed that the national quarrel, in which so much blood had been sacrificed, should that day again be the occasion of deadly strife.

A loud flourish of trumpets, seeming to proceed from beneath the earth, now rung through the church, and roused the attention of the soldiers and worshippers then assembled. Most of those who heard these warlike sounds betook themselves to their weapons, as if they considered it useless to wait any longer for the signal of conflict. Hoarse voices, rude exclamations, the rattle of swords against their sheaths, or their clashing against other pieces of armour, gave an awful presage of an onset, which, however, was for a time averted by the exhortations of the bishop. A second flourish of trumpets having taken place, the voice of a herald made proclamation to the following purpose:—

'That whereas there were many noble pursuivants of chivalry presently assembled in the kirk of Douglas, and whereas there existed among them the usual causes of quarrel and points of debate for their advancement in chivalry, therefore the Scottish knights were ready to fight any number of the English who might be agreed, either upon the superior beauty of their ladies, or upon the national quarrel in any of its branches, or upon whatever point might be at issue between them, which should be deemed satisfactory ground of quarrel by both; and the knights who should chance to be worsted in such dispute should renounce the prosecution thereof, or the bearing arms therein thereafter, with such other conditions to ensue upon their defeat as might be agreed upon by a council of the knights present at the kirk of Douglas aforesaid. But foremost of all, any number of Scottish knights, from one to twenty, will defend the quarrel which has already drawn blood, touching the freedom of Lady Augusta de Berkely, and the rendition of Douglas Castle to the owner here present. Wherefore it is required that the English knights do intimate their consent that such trial of valour take place, which, according to the rules of chivalry, they cannot refuse, without losing utterly the reputation of valour, and incurring the diminution of such other degree of estimation as a courageous pursuivant of arms would willingly be held in, both by the good knights of his own country and those of others.'

This unexpected gage of battle realised the worst fears of those who had looked with suspicion on the extraordinary assemblage this day of the dependants of the house of Douglas. After a short pause, the trumpets again flourished lustily, when the reply of the English knights was made in the following terms:—

'That God forbid the rights and privileges of England's knights, and the beauty of her damsels, should not be asserted by her children, or that such English knights as were here assembled should show the least backwardness to accept the combat offered, whether grounded upon the superior beauty of their ladies or whether upon the causes of dispute between the countries, for either or all of which the knights of England here present were willing to do battle in the terms of the indenture aforesaid, while sword and lance shall endure. Saving and excepting the surrender of the Castle of Douglas, which can be rendered to no one but England's king, or those acting under his orders.'

CHAPTER XX

Cry the wild war-note, let the champions pass,
Do bravely each, and God defend the right ;
Upon St. Andrew thrice can they thus cry,
And thrice they shout on height,
And then marked them on the Englishmen,
As I have told you right.
St. George the bright, our ladies' knight,
To name they were full fain ;
Our Englishmen they cried on height,
And thrice they shout again.

Old Ballad.

THE extraordinary crisis mentioned in the preceding chapter was the cause, as may be supposed, of the leaders on both sides now throwing aside all concealment, and displaying their utmost strength, by marshalling their respective adherents ; the renowned knight of Douglas, with Sir Malcolm Fleming and other distinguished cavaliers, were seen in close consultation.

Sir John de Walton, startled by the first flourish of trumpets, while anxiously endeavouring to secure a retreat for the Lady Augusta, was in a moment seen collecting his followers, in which he was assisted by the active friendship of the knight of Valence.

The Lady of Berkely showed no craven spirit at these war-like preparations : she advanced, closely followed by the faithful Bertram, and a female in a riding-hood, whose face, though carefully concealed, was no other than that of the unfortunate Margaret de Hautlieu, whose worst fears had been realised as to the faithlessness of her betrothed knight.

A pause ensued, which for some time no one present thought himself of authority sufficient to break.

At last the knight of Douglas stepped forward and said loudly, 'I wait to know whether Sir John de Walton requests leave of James of Douglas to evacuate his castle without further wasting that daylight which might show us to judge

a fair field, and whether he craves Douglas's protection in doing so ?'

The knight of Walton drew his sword. 'I hold the Castle of Douglas,' he said, 'in spite of all deadly ; and never will I ask the protection from any one which my own sword is competent to afford me.'

'I stand by you, Sir John,' said Aymer de Valence, 'as your true comrade, against whatever odds may oppose themselves to us.'

'Courage, noble English,' said the voice of Greenleaf ; 'take your weapons, in God's name. Bows and bills — bows and bills ! A messenger brings us notice that Pembroke is in full march hither from the borders of Ayrshire, and will be with us in half an hour. Fight on, gallant English ! Valence to the rescue ! and long life to the gallant Earl of Pembroke !'

Those English within and around the church no longer delayed to take arms, and De Walton, crying out at the height of his voice, 'I implore the Douglas to look nearly to the safety of the ladies,' fought his way to the church door, the Scottish finding themselves unable to resist the impression of terror which affected them at the sight of this renowned knight, seconded by his brother-in-arms, both of whom had been so long the terror of the district. In the meantime, it is possible that De Walton might altogether have forced his way out of the church, had he not been met boldly by the young son of Thomas Dickson of Hazelside, while his father was receiving from Douglas the charge of preserving the stranger ladies from all harm from the fight, which, so long suspended, was now on the point of taking place.

De Walton cast his eye upon the Lady Augusta, with a desire of rushing to the rescue ; but was forced to conclude that he provided best for her safety by leaving her under the protection of Douglas's honour.

Young Dickson, in the meantime, heaped blow on blow, seconding with all his juvenile courage every effort he could make, in order to attain the prize due to the conqueror of the renowned De Walton.

'Silly boy,' at length said Sir John, who had for some time forborne the stripling, 'take, then, thy death from a noble hand, since thou preferrest that to peace and length of days.'

'I care not,' said the Scottish youth, with his dying breath : 'I have lived long enough, since I have kept you so long in the place where you now stand.'

And the youth said truly, for, as he fell never again to rise, the Douglas stood in his place, and, without a word spoken, again engaged with De Walton in the same formidable single combat by which they had already been distinguished, but with even additional fury. Aymer de Valence drew up to his friend De Walton's left hand, and seemed but to desire the apology of one of Douglas's people attempting to second him to join in the fray; but as he saw no person who seemed disposed to give him such opportunity, he repressed the inclination, and remained an unwilling spectator. At length it seemed as if Fleming, who stood foremost among the Scottish knights, was desirous to measure his sword with De Valence. Aymer himself, burning with the desire of combat, at last called out, 'Faithless knight of Boghall, step forth and defend yourself against the imputation of having deserted your lady-love, and of being a mansworn disgrace to the rolls of chivalry!'

'My answer,' said Fleming, 'even to a less gross taunt, hangs by my side.' In an instant his sword was in his hand, and even the practised warriors who looked on felt difficulty in discovering the progress of the strife, which rather resembled a thunderstorm in a mountainous country than the stroke and parry of two swords, offending on the one side and keeping the defensive on the other.

Their blows were exchanged with surprising rapidity; and although the two combatants did not equal Douglas and De Walton in maintaining a certain degree of reserve, founded upon a respect which these knights mutually entertained for each other, yet the want of art was supplied by a degree of fury which gave chance at least an equal share in the issue.

Seeing their superiors thus desperately engaged, the partizans, as they were accustomed, stood still on either side, and looked on with the reverence which they instinctively paid to their commanders and leaders in arms. One or two of the women were in the meanwhile attracted, according to the nature of the sex, by compassion for those who had already experienced the casualties of war. Young Dickson, breathing his last among the feet of the combatants,¹ was in some sort rescued from the tumult by the Lady of Berkely, in whom the action seemed less strange, owing to the pilgrim's dress which she still retained, and who in vain endeavoured to solicit the attention of the boy's father to the task in which she was engaged.

'Cumber yourself not, lady, about that which is bootless,'

¹ See Death of Young Dickson. Note 11.

said old Dickson, 'and distract not your own attention and mine from preserving you, whom it is the Douglas's wish to rescue, and whom, so please God and St. Bride, I consider as placed by my chieftain under my charge. Believe me, this youth's death is in no way forgotten, though this be not the time to remember it. A time will come for recollection, and an hour for revenge.'

So said the stern old man, reverting his eyes from the bloody corpse which lay at his feet, a model of beauty and strength. Having taken one more anxious look, he turned round, and placed himself where he could best protect the Lady of Berkely, not again turning his eyes on his son's body.

In the interim the combat continued, without the least cessation on either side, and without a decided advantage. At length, however, fate seemed disposed to interfere: the knight of Fleming, pushing fiercely forward, and brought by chance almost close to the person of the Lady Margaret de Hautlieu, missed his blow, and his foot sliding in the blood of the young victim, Dickson, he fell before his antagonist, and was in imminent danger of being at his mercy, when Margaret de Hautlieu, who inherited the soul of a warrior, and, besides, was a very strong, as well as an undaunted, person, seeing a mace of no great weight lying on the floor, where it had been dropped by the fallen Dickson—it at the same instant caught her eye, armed her hand, and intercepted or struck down the sword of Sir Aymer de Valence, who would otherwise have remained the master of the day at that interesting moment. Fleming had more to do to avail himself of an unexpected chance of recovery than to make a commentary upon the manner in which it had been so singularly brought about: he instantly recovered the advantage he had lost, and was able in the ensuing close to trip up the feet of his antagonist, who fell on the pavement, while the voice of his conqueror, if he could properly be termed such, resounded through the church with the fatal words, 'Yield thee, Aymer de Valence—rescue or no rescue; yield thee—yield thee!' he added, as he placed his sword to the throat of the fallen knight, 'not to me, but to this noble lady—rescue or no rescue.'

With a heavy heart the English knight perceived that he had fairly lost so favourable an opportunity of acquiring fame, and was obliged to submit to his destiny, or be slain upon the spot. There was only one consolation, that no battle was ever

more honourably sustained, being gained as much by accident as by valour.

The fate of the protracted and desperate combat between Douglas and De Walton did not much longer remain in suspense; indeed, the number of conquests in single combat achieved by the Douglas in these wars was so great as to make it doubtful whether he was not, in personal strength and skill, even a superior knight to Bruce himself, and he was at least acknowledged nearly his equal in the art of war.

So, however, it was that, when three-quarters of an hour had passed in hard contest, Douglas and De Walton, whose nerves were not actually of iron, began to show some signs that their human bodies were feeling the effect of the dreadful exertion. Their blows began to be drawn more slowly, and were parried with less celerity. Douglas, seeing that the combat must soon come to an end, generously made a signal, intimating to his antagonist to hold his hand for an instant.

'Brave de Walton,' he said, 'there is no mortal quarrel between us, and you must be sensible that in this passage of arms Douglas, though he is only worth his sword and his cloak, has abstained from taking a decisive advantage when the chance of arms has more than once offered it. My father's house, the broad domains around it, the dwelling, and the graves of my ancestors, form a reasonable reward for a knight to fight for, and call upon me in an imperative voice to prosecute the strife which has such an object, while you are as welcome to the noble lady, in all honour and safety, as if you had received her from the hands of King Edward himself; and I give you my word, that the utmost honours which can attend a prisoner, and a careful absence of everything like injury or insult, shall attend De Walton when he yields up the castle, as well as his sword, to James of Douglas.'

'It is the fate to which I am perhaps doomed,' replied Sir John de Walton; 'but never will I voluntarily embrace it, and never shall it be said that my own tongue, saving in the last extremity, pronounced upon me the fatal sentence to sink the point of my own sword. Pembroke is upon the march with his whole army to rescue the garrison of Douglas. I hear the tramp of his horse's feet even now; and I will maintain my ground while I am within reach of support; nor do I fear that the breath which now begins to fail will not last long enough to uphold the struggle till the arrival of the expected succour. Come on, then, and treat me not as a child, but as one who,

whether I stand or fall, fears not to encounter the utmost force of my knightly antagonist.'

'So be it, then,' said Douglas, a darksome hue, like the lurid colour of the thunder-cloud, changing his brow as he spoke, intimating that he meditated a speedy end to the contest, when, just as the noise of horses' feet drew nigh, a Welsh knight, known as such by the diminutive size of his steed, his naked limbs, and his bloody spear, called out loudly to the combatants to hold their hands.

'Is Pembroke near?' said De Walton.

'No nearer than Loudon Hill,' said the Prestantin; 'but I bring his commands to John de Walton.'

'I stand ready to obey them through every danger,' answered the knight.

'Woe is me,' said the Welshman, 'that my mouth should bring to the ears of so brave a man tidings so unwelcome! The Earl of Pembroke yesterday received information that the Castle of Douglas was attacked by the son of the deceased earl and the whole inhabitants of the district. Pembroke, on hearing this, resolved to march to your support, noble knight, with all the forces he had at his disposal. He did so, and accordingly entertained every assurance of relieving the castle, when unexpectedly he met, on Loudon Hill, a body of men of no very inferior force to his own, and having at their head that famous Bruce whom the Scottish rebels acknowledge as their king. He marched instantly to the attack, swearing he would not even draw a comb through his grey beard until he had rid England of this recurring plague. But the fate of war was against us.'

He stooped here for lack of breath.

'I thought so!' exclaimed Douglas. 'Robert Bruce will now sleep at night, since he has paid home Pembroke for the slaughter of his friends and the dispersion of his army at Methuen Wood. His men are, indeed, accustomed to meet with dangers, and to conquer them: those who follow him have been trained under Wallace, besides being partakers of the perils of Bruce himself. It was thought that the waves had swallowed them when they shipped themselves from the west; but know that the Bruce was determined with the present reviving spring to awaken his pretensions, and that he retires not from Scotland again while he lives, and while a single lord remains to set his foot by his sovereign, in spite of all the power which has been so feloniously employed against him.'

'It is even too true,' said the Welshman Meredith, 'although it is said by a proud Scotchman. The Earl of Pembroke, completely defeated, is unable to stir from Ayr, towards which he has retreated with great loss; and he sends his instructions to Sir John de Walton to make the best terms he can for the surrender of the Castle of Douglas, and trust nothing to his support.'

The Scottish, who heard this unexpected news, joined in a shout so loud and energetic, that the ruins of the ancient church seemed actually to rock, and threaten to fall on the heads of those who were crowded within it.

The brow of De Walton was overclouded at the news of Pembroke's defeat, although in some respects it placed him at liberty to take measures for the safety of the Lady of Berkely. He could not, however, claim the same honourable terms which had been offered to him by Douglas before the news of the battle of Loudon Hill had arrived.

'Noble knight,' he said, 'it is entirely at your pleasure to dictate the terms of surrender of your paternal castle; nor have I a right to claim from you those conditions which, a little while since, your generosity put in my offer. But I submit to my fate; and upon whatever terms you think fit to grant me, I must be content to offer to surrender to you the weapon of which I now put the point in the earth, in evidence that I will never more direct it against you until a fair ransom shall place it once more at my own disposal.'

'God forbid,' answered the noble James of Douglas, 'that I should take such advantage of the bravest knight out of not a few who have found me work in battle! I will take example from the knight of Fleming, who has gallantly bestowed his captive in guerdon upon a noble damsel here present; and in like manner I transfer my claim upon the person of the redoubted knight of Walton to the high and noble Lady Augusta Berkely, who, I hope, will not scorn to accept from the Douglas a gift which the chance of war has thrown into his hands.'

Sir John de Walton, on hearing this unexpected decision, looked up like the traveller who discovers the beams of the sun breaking through and dispersing the tempest which has accompanied him for a whole morning. The Lady of Berkely recollected what became her rank, and showed her sense of the Douglas's chivalry. Hastily wiping off the tears which had unwillingly flowed to her eyes, while her lover's safety and her own were resting on the precarious issue of a desperate combat,

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CASTLE DANGEROUS

ment. It chanced, however, at a later period of the war with England, while Fleming was one night travelling upon the Border, after the ordinary fashion of one who sought adventures, a waiting-maid, equipped in a fantastic habit, asked the protection of his arm in the name of her lady, who, late in the evening, had been made captive, she said, by certain ill-disposed caitiffs, who were carrying her by force through the forest. The Fleming's lance was, of course, in its rest, and woe betide the faitour whose lot it was to encounter its thrust : the first fell, incapable of farther combat, and another of the felons encountered the same fate with little more resistance. The lady, released from the discourteous cord which restrained her liberty, did not hesitate to join company with the brave knight by whom she had been rescued ; and although the darkness did not permit her to recognise her old lover in her liberator, yet she could not but lend a willing ear to the conversation with which he entertained her, as they proceeded on the way. He spoke of the fallen caitiffs as being Englishmen, who found a pleasure in exercising oppression and barbarities upon the wandering damsels of Scotland, and whose cause, therefore, the champions of that country were bound to avenge while the blood throbbed in their veins. He spoke of the injustice of the national quarrel which had afforded a pretence for such deliberate oppression ; and the lady, who herself had suffered so much by the interference of the English in the affairs of Scotland, readily acquiesced in the sentiments which he expressed on a subject which she had so much reason for regarding as an afflicting one. Her answer was given in the spirit of a person who would not hesitate, if the times should call for such an example, to defend even with her hand the rights which she asserted with her tongue.

Pleased with the sentiments which she expressed, and recognising in her voice that secret charm which, once impressed upon the human heart, is rarely wrought out of the remembrance by a long train of subsequent events, he almost persuaded himself that the tones were familiar to him, and had at one time formed the key to his innermost affections. In proceeding on their journey, the knight's troubled state of mind was augmented instead of being diminished. The scenes of his earliest youth were recalled by circumstances so slight as would in ordinary cases have produced no effect whatever ; the sentiments appeared similar to those which his life had been devoted to enforce, and he half persuaded himself that the

dawn of day was to be to him the beginning of a fortune equally singular and extraordinary.

In the midst of this anxiety, Sir Malcolm Fleming had no anticipation that the lady whom he had heretofore rejected was again thrown into his path, after years of absence; still less, when daylight gave him a partial view of his fair companion's countenance, was he prepared to believe that he was once again to term himself the champion of Margaret de Hautlieu, but it was so. The lady, on that direful morning when she retired from the church of Douglas, had not resolved (indeed, what lady ever did?) to renounce, without some struggle, the beauties which she had once possessed. A long process of time, employed under skilful hands, had succeeded in obliterating the scars which remained as the marks of her fall. These were now considerably effaced, and the lost organ of sight no longer appeared so great a blemish, concealed as it was by a black ribbon and the arts of the tirewoman, who made it her business to shadow it over by a lock of hair. In a word, he saw the same Margaret de Hautlieu, with no very different style of expression from that which her face, partaking of the high and passionate character of her soul, had always presented. It seemed to both, therefore, that their fate, by bringing them together after a separation which appeared so decisive, had intimated its fiat that their fortunes were inseparable from each other. By the time that the summer sun had climbed high in the heavens, the two travellers rode apart from their retinue, conversing together with an eagerness which marked the important matters in discussion between them; and in a short time it was made generally known through Scotland that Sir Malcolm Fleming and the Lady Margaret de Hautlieu were to be united at the court of the good King Robert, and the husband invested with the honours of Biggar and Cumbernauld, an earldom so long known in the family of Fleming.

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THE gentle reader is acquainted that these are, in all probability, the last tales which it will be the lot of the Author to submit to the public. He is now on the eve of visiting foreign parts: a ship of war is commissioned by its royal master to carry the Author of *Waverley* to climates in which he may possibly obtain such a restoration of health as may serve him to spin his thread to an end in his own country. Had he continued to prosecute his usual literary labours, it seems indeed probable that, at the term of years he has already attained, the bowl, to use the pathetic language of Scripture, would have been broken at the fountain; and little can one who has enjoyed on the whole an uncommon share of the most inestimable of worldly blessings be entitled to complain that life, advancing to its period, should be attended with its usual proportions of shadows and storms. They have affected him at least in no more painful manner than is inseparable from the discharge of this part of the debt of humanity. Of those whose relation to him in the ranks of life might have ensured him their sympathy under indisposition, many are now no more; and those who may yet follow in his wake are entitled to expect, in bearing inevitable evils, an example of firmness and patience, more especially on the part of one who has enjoyed no small good fortune during the course of his pilgrimage.

The public have claims on his gratitude for which the Author of *Waverley* has no adequate means of expression; but he may be permitted to hope that the powers of his mind, such as they are, may not have a different date from those of his body; and that he may again meet his patronising friends, if not exactly in his old fashion of literature, at least in some branch which may not call forth the remark that—

Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage.

ABBOTSFORD, September 1831.

APPENDIX TO INTRODUCTION

TO

THE SURGEON'S DAUGHTER

MR. TRAIN was requested by Sir Walter Scott to give him in writing the story as nearly as possible in the shape in which he had told it; but the following narrative, which he drew up accordingly, did not reach Abbotsford until July 1832:—

In the old stock of Fife there was not perhaps an individual whose exertions were followed by consequences of such a remarkable nature as those of Davie Duff, popularly called the 'Thane of Fife,' who, from a very humble parentage, rose to fill one of the chairs of the magistracy of his native burgh. By industry and economy in early life, he obtained the means of erecting, solely on his own account, one of those ingenious manufactories for which Fifeshire is justly celebrated. From the day on which the industrious artisan first took his seat at the council board, he attended so much to the interests of the little privileged community, that civic honours were conferred on him as rapidly as the set of the royalty¹ could legally admit.

To have the right of walking to church on holyday, preceded by a phalanx of halberdiers, in habiliments fashioned as in former times, seems, in the eyes of many a guild brother, to be a very enviable pitch of worldly grandeur. Few persons were ever more proud of civic honours than the Thane of Fife, but he knew well how to turn his political influence to the best account. The council, court, and other business of the burgh occupied much of his time, which caused him to entrust the management of his manufactory to a near relation whose name was D——, a young man of dissolute habits; but the Thane, seeing at last that, by continuing that extravagant person in that charge, his affairs would, in all probability, fall into a state of bankruptcy, applied to the member of Parliament for that district to obtain a situation for his relation in the civil department of the state. The knight, whom it is here unnecessary to name, knowing how effectually the Thane ruled the little burgh, applied in the proper quarter, and actually obtained an appointment for D—— in the civil service of the East India Company.

A respectable surgeon, whose residence was in a neighbouring village, had a beautiful daughter named Emma, who had long been courted by D——. Immediately before his departure to India, as a mark of mutual affection, they exchanged miniatures, taken by an eminent artist in Fife, and each set in a locket, for the purpose of having the object of affection always in view.

The eyes of the old Thane were now turned towards Hindostan with much anxiety; but his relation had not long arrived in that distant quarter

¹ The constitution of the borough.

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of the globe before he had the satisfaction of receiving a letter, conveying the welcome intelligence of his having taken possession of his new station in a large frontier town of the Company's dominions, and that great emoluments were attached to the situation; which was confirmed by several subsequent communications of the most gratifying description to the old Thane, who took great pleasure in spreading the news of the reformed habits and singular good fortune of his intended heir. None of all his former acquaintances heard with such joy the favourable report of the successful adventurer in the East as did the fair and accomplished daughter of the village surgeon; but his previous character caused her to keep her own correspondence with him secret from her parents, to whom even the circumstance of her being acquainted with D—— was wholly unknown, till her father received a letter from him, in which he assured him of his attachment to Emma long before his departure from Fife; that, having been so happy as to gain her affections, he would have made her his wife before leaving his native country, had he then had the means of supporting her in a suitable rank through life; and that, having it now in his power to do so, he only waited the consent of her parents to fulfil the vow he had formerly made.

The doctor having a large family, with a very limited income to support them, and understanding that D—— had at last become a person of sober and industrious habits, he gave his consent, in which Emma's mother fully concurred.

Aware of the straitened circumstances of the doctor, D—— remitted a sum of money to complete at Edinburgh Emma's Oriental education, and fit her out in her journey to India; she was to embark at Sheerness, on board one of the Company's ships, for a port in India, at which place, he said, he would wait her arrival, with a retinue suited to a person of his rank in society.

Emma set out from her father's house just in time to secure a passage, as proposed by her intended husband, accompanied by her only brother, who, on their arrival at Sheerness, met one C——, an old schoolfellow, captain of the ship by which Emma was to proceed to India.

It was the particular desire of the doctor that his daughter should be committed to the care of that gentleman, from the time of her leaving the shores of Britain till the intended marriage ceremony was duly performed on her arrival in India — a charge that was frankly undertaken by the generous sea-captain.

On the arrival of the fleet at the appointed port, D——, with a large cavalcade of mounted Pindarees, was, as expected, in attendance, ready to salute Emma on landing, and to carry her direct into the interior of the country. C——, who had made several voyages to the shores of Hindostan, knowing something of Hindoo manners and customs, was surprised to see a private individual in the Company's service with so many attendants; and when D—— declined having the marriage ceremony performed, according to the rites of the church, till he returned to the place of his abode, C——, more and more confirmed in his suspicion that all was not right, resolved not to part with Emma till he had fulfilled, in the most satisfactory manner, the promise he had made before leaving England, of giving her duly away in marriage. Not being able by her entreaties to alter the resolution of D——, Emma solicited her protector C—— to accompany her to the place of her intended destination, to which he most readily agreed, taking with him as many of his crew as he deemed sufficient to ensure the safe custody of his innocent *protégée*, should any attempt be made to carry her away by force.

Both parties journeyed onwards till they arrived at a frontier town, where a native rajah was waiting the arrival of the fair maid of Fife, with whom he had fallen deeply in love, from seeing her miniature likeness in the possession of D——, to whom he had paid a large sum of money for the original, and had only entrusted him to convey her in state to the seat of his government.

TO THE SURGEON'S DAUGHTER 367

No sooner was this villainous action of D—— known to C—— than he communicated the whole particulars to the commanding officer of a regiment of Scotch Highlanders that happened to be quartered in that part of India, begging at the same time, for the honour of Caledonia and protection of injured innocence, that he would use the means in his power of resisting any attempt that might be made by the native chief to wrest from their hands the virtuous female who had been so shamefully decoyed from her native country by the worst of mankind. Honour occupies too large a space in the heart of the Gael to resist such a call of humanity.

The rajah, finding his claim was not to be acceded to, and resolving to enforce the same, assembled his troops, and attacked with great fury the place where the affrighted Emma was for a time secured by her countrymen, who fought in her defence with all their native valour, which at length so overpowered their assailants, that they were forced to retire in every direction, leaving behind many of their slain, among whom was found the mangled corpse of the perfidious D——.

C—— was immediately afterwards married to Emma, and my informant assured me he saw them many years afterwards, living happily together in the county of Kent, on the fortune bequeathed by the 'Thane of Fife.'

J. T.

CASTLE DOUGLAS, *July*, 1832.

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APPENDICES TO INTRODUCTION

TO

CASTLE DANGEROUS

No. I

Extracts from *The History of the Houses of Douglas and Angus.*

By Master DAVID HUME of Godscroft. Fol. Edit.

AND here indeed the course of the King's misfortunes begins to make some halt and stay by thus much prosperous successes in his own person, but more in the person of Sir James, by the reconquests of his own castles and countries. From hence he went into Douglasdale, where, by the means of his father's old servant, Thomas Dickson, he took in the Castle of Douglas, and not being able to keep it, he caused burn it, contenting himself with this, that his enemies had one strength fewer in that country than before. The manner of his taking of it is said to have been thus:—Sir James, taking onely with him two of his servants, went to Thomas Dickson, of whom he was received with tears, after he had revealed himselfe to him, for the good old man knew him not at first, being in meane and homely apparell. There he kept him secretly in a quiet chamber, and brought unto him such as had beene trusty servants to his father, not all at once, but apart by one and one, for feare of discoverie. Their advice was, that on Palmsunday, when the English would come forth to the church, and his partners were convened, that then he should give the word, and cry the Douglas slogan, and presently set upon them that should happen to be there, who being dispatched, the castle might be taken easily. This being concluded, and they come, so soon as the English were entered into the church with palms in their hands (according to the custome of that day), little suspecting or fearing any such thing, Sir James, according to their appointment, cryed too soone (a Douglas, a Douglas!), which being heard in the church (this was St. Bride's church of Douglas), Thomas Dickson, supposing he had beene hard at hand, drew out his sword, and ran upon them, having none to second him but another man, so that, oppressed by the number of his enemies, he was beaten downe and slaine. In the meantime, Sir James being come, the English that were in the chancel kept off the Scots, and, having the advantage of the strait and narrow entrie, defended themselves manfully. But Sir James encouraging his men, not so much by words as by deeds and good example, and having slain the boldest resisters, prevailed at last, and entering the place, slew some twenty-six of their number, and tooke the rest, about ten or twelve persons, intending by them to get the castle upon composition, or to enter with them when the gates should be opened to let them in; but it needed not, for they of the castle were so secure, that there was none left to keepe it save the porter and the cooke, who, knowing nothing of what had hapned at the church, which stood a large quarter of a mile from thence, had left the gate wide open, the porter standing without, and the cooke dressing the dinner within. They entered without resistance, and meat being ready, and the cloth laid, they shut the gates, and tooke their refectation at good leasure.

Now that he had gotten the castle into his hands, considering with himself (as he was a man no lesse advised than valiant) that it was hard for him to keep it, the English being as yet the stronger in that countrey, who if they should besiege him, he knewe of no reliefe, he thought better to carry away such things as be most easily transported, gold, silver, and apparell, with ammunition and armour, whereof he had greatest use and need, and to destroy the rest of the provision, together with the castle itselfe, then to diminish the number of his followers for a garrison there where it could do no good. And so he caused carrie the meale and malt, and other cornes and graine, into the cellar, and layd all together in one heape; then he took the prisoners and slew them, to revenge the death of his trustie and valiant servant, Thomas Dickson, mingling the victuals with their bloud, and burying their carkasses in the heap of corne; after that he struck out the heads of the barrells and puncheons, and let the drink runne through all; and then he cast the carkasses of dead horses and other carrion amongst it, throwing the salt above all, so to make altogether unusefull to the enemye and this cellar is called yet the Douglas Lairder. Last of all, he set the house on fire, and burnt all the timber, and what else the fire could overcome, leaving nothing but the scorched walls behind him. And this seemes to be the first taking of the Castle of Douglas, for it is supposed that he took it twice. For this service, and others due to Lord William his father, Sir James gave unto Thomas Dickson the lands of Hisleside, which hath bene given him before the castle was taken as an encouragement to whet him on, and not after, for he was slaine in the church; which was both liberally and wisely done of him, thus to hearten and draw men to his service by such a noble beginning. The castle being burnt, Sir James retired, and parting his men into divers companies, so as they might be most secret, he caused cure such as were wounded in the fight, and he himselfe kept as close as he could, waiting ever for an occasion to enterprise something against the enemye. So soone as he was gone, the Lord Clifford being advertised of what had happened, came himselfe in person to Douglas, and caused re-edifie and repair the castle in a very short time, unto which he also added a tower, which is yet called Harries Tower from him, and so returned into Engiand, leaving one Thruswall to be captain thereof.

He (Sir James Douglas), getting him again into Douglasdale, did use this stratagem against Thruswall, Capitaine of the Castle, under the said Lord Clifford. He caused some of his folk drive away the cattell that fed neare unto the castle, and when the capitaine of the garrison followed to rescue, gave orders to his men to leave them and to flee away. Thus he did often to make the capitaine slight such frayes, and to make him secure, that he might not suspect any further end to be on it; which when he had wrought sufficiently (as he thought), he laid some men in ambuscado, and sent others away to drive such beasts as they should finde in the view of the castle, as if they had been theeves and robbers, as they had done often before. The capitaine hearing of it, and supposing there was no greater danger now then had bene before, issued forth of the castle, and followed after them with such haste that his men (running who should be first) were disordered and out of their ranks. The drivers also fled as fast as they could till they had drawne the capitaine a little way beyond the place of ambuscado, which when they perceived, rising quickly out of their covert, they set fiercely upon him and his companies, and so slew himselfe and chased his men back to the castle, some of whom were overtaken and slaine, others got into the castle and so were saved. Sir James, not being able to force the house, took what bootie he could get without in the fields, and so departed. By this means, and such other exploits, he so affrighted the enemye, that it was counted a matter of such great jeopardie to keepe this castle, that it began to be called the adventurous (or hazardous) Castle of Douglas. Whereupon Sir John Walton being in suit of an English lady, she wrote to him that when he had kept the adventurous Castle of Douglas seven years, then he might think himselfe worthy to be a sutor to her. Upon this occasion, Walton tooke upon him the keeping of it, and succeeded to Thruswall; but he ran the same fortune with the rest that were before him.

For, Sir James having first dressed an ambuscado near unto the place, he made fourteen of his men take so many sacks, and fill them with grasse, as though it had been corn, which they carried in the way toward Lanark, the chief market-town in that county; so hoping to draw forth the captain by that bait, and either to take him or the castle, or both.

Neither was this expectation frustrate, for the captain did bite, and came forth to have taken this victual (as he supposed). But ere he could reach these carriers, Sir James, with his company, had gotten between the castle and him; and these disguised carriers, seeing the captain following after them, did quickly cast off their upper garments, wherein they had masked themselves, and throwing off their sacks, mouned themselves on horseback, and met the captain with a sharp encounter, he being so much the more amazed that it was unlooked for; wherefore, when he saw these carriers metamorphosed into warriors, and ready to assault him, fearing that which was, that there was some train laid for them, he turned about to have retired into the castle; but

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there also hee met with his enemies; between which two companies he and his followers were slain, so that none escaped; the captain afterwards being searched, they found (as it is reported) his mistress's letters about him. Then hee went and tooke in the castle, but it is uncertain (say our writers) whether by force or composition; but it seems that the Constable, and those that were within, have yielded it up without force; in regard that hee used them so gently, which he would not have done if he had taken it at utterance. For he sent them all safe home to the Lord Clifford, and gave them also provision and money for their entertainment by the way. The castle, which he had burnt onely before, now he razeth, and casts down the walls thereof to the ground. By these and the like proceedings, within a short while he freed Douglasdale, Attrick Forrest, and Jedward Forrest of the English garrisons and subjection. — Pages 26-30.

No. II

Extracts from *The Bruce* — *Liber Compositus per Magistrum Johannem Barber, Archidiaconum Abyrdonensem, de Gestis, Bellis, et Virtutibus, Domini Roberti Bruce, Regis Scocie Illustrissimi, et de Conquestu Regni Scocie per eundem, et de Domino Jacobo de Douglas.* Edited by John Jamieson, D.D., F.R.S.E., etc. etc. Edinburgh, 1820.

Now takis James his wiage
Toward Dowglas, his heretage,
With twa yemen, for owtyne ma;
That wes a symple stuff to ta,
A land or a castell to wyn.
The quethir he yarnyt to begyn
Till bring purposse till ending;
For gud help is in gud begynnynge,
For gud begynnynge, and hardy,
Gyff it be folowit wittily,
May ger otfays unlikely thing
Cum to full conabill ending.
Swa did it here: but he wes wyss
And saw he mycht, on nakyn wyss,
Werray his fa with ewyn mycht;
Tharfor he thoct to wyрк with slycht.
And in Dowglas daile, his countré,
Upon an ewynynge entryt he.
And than a man wonnyt tharby,
That was off freyndis weill mychty,
And ryche of moble, and off catell,
And had bene till his fadyr leyll;
And till him self, in his yowthed,
He had done mony a thankfull deid.
Thom Dicson wes his name perfay.
Till him he send; and gan him pray,
That he wald cum all anerly
For to speik with him priuely.
And he but daunger till him gais:
Bot fra he tauld him quhat he wais,
He gret for joy, and for pité;
And him rycht till his hous had he;
Quhar in a chambere priuely
He held him, and his company,
That nane had off him persawene.
Off mete, and drynk, and othyr thing,
That mycht thaim eyss, thai had plenté
Sa wrocht he throw autelké,
That all the lele men off that land,
That with his fadyr war duelland,
This gud man gert cum, ane and ane,
And mak him maurent euir ilkane;

And he him self fyrst homage maid.
Dowglas in part gret glaidship haid,
That the gud men off his countré
Wald swagate till him bundyn be.
He speryt the conwyne off the land,
And quha the castell had in hand,
And thai him tauld all haily;
And syne among them priuely
Thai ordanyt, that he stail suld be
In hiddillis, and in priuete,
Till Palme Sunday, that wes ner hand,
The thrid day eftyr followand.
For than the folk off that countré
Assemblyt at the kyrk wald be;
And thai, that in the castell wer,
Wald als be thar, thar palms to ber,
As folk that had na dreid off ill;
For thai thought all wes at thair will.
Than suld he cum with his twa men.
Bot, for that men suld nocht him ken,
He suld ane mantill haiff auld and bar,
And a faill, as be a thersscher war.
Wndyr the mantill nocht for thi
He suld be armyt priuely.
And quhen the men off his countré,
That suld all boune befor him be,
His ensenye mycht her hym cry,
Then suld thai, full enforcely,
Rycht ynyddys the kyrk assaill
The Ingles men with hard bataill,
Swa that nane mycht eschep tham fra;
For thar throwe throwyt thai to ta
The castell, that besid wes ner.
And quhen this, that I tell you her,
Wes diuisyt, and wnderstane,
Ilkane till his hows hame is gane;
And held this speik in priuete,
Till the day off thar assembly.

The folk upon the Sonunday
Held to Saynet Bridis kyrk thair way;
And tha that in the castell war

Ischyt owt, bath les and mar,
 And went thair palms for to ber;
 Owtane a cuk and a porter.
 James off Dowglas off thair cummyng,
 And quhat thai war, had witting;
 And sped him till the kyrk in hy.
 Bot or he come, too hastily
 Ane off his cryit, 'Dowglas! Dowglas!'
 Thomas Dikson, that nerrest was
 Till thaim that war off the castell,
 That war all innouth the chancell,
 Quhen he 'Dowglas!' swa he herd cry,
 Drew owt his swerd; and fellely
 Ruschyt amang thaim to and fra.
 Bot ane or twa, for owtyn ma,
 Than in hy war left lyand,
 Quhill Dowglas come rycht at hand,
 And then enforeyt on thaim the cry.
 Bot thai the chancell sturdely
 Held, and thaim defendyt wele,
 Till off thair men war slayne sumdell.
 Bot the Dowglace sa weill him bar,
 That all the men, that with him war,
 Had confort off his wele doying;
 And he him sparyt nakyn thing,
 Bot prowyt swa his force in fycht,
 That throw his worschip and his mycht
 His men sa keynly helpyt than,
 That thai the chancell on thaim wan.
 Than dand thai on swa hardyly,
 That in schort tyme men mycht se ly
 The twa part dede, or then deand.
 The lave war sesyt sone in hand,
 Swa that off thretty levyt nane,
 That thai ne war slayne ilkan, or tane.

James off Dowglas, quhen this was done,
 The prisoner has he tane alone;
 And, with thaim off his company,
 Toward the castell went in hy,
 Or noyiss or cry suld ryss.
 And for he wald thaim sone suppriss,
 That levyt in the castell war,
 That war but twa for owtyn mar,
 Fyre men or sex befor send he,
 That fand all opyn the entre;
 And entryt, and the porter tuk
 Rycht at the gate, and syne the cuk.
 With that Dowglas come to the yat,
 And entryt in for owtyn debate;
 And fand the mete all redy grathit,
 With burdys set, and clathis layit.
 The yhaits then he gert sper,
 And sat, and eyt all at layser.
 Syne all the gudis tursyt thai
 That thaim thocht thai mycht haif away;
 And naily wapyns, and armyng,
 Siluer, and tresour, and clethyng.
 Wycallis, that mycht nocht tursyt be,
 On this manner destroyit he.
 All the victualis, owtane salt,
 Als quheyte, and flour, and meill, and malt
 In the wyne sellar gert he bring;
 And samyn on the fiur all flyng,
 And the prisoner that he had tane
 Fycht thar in gert he heid ilkane;
 Syne off the townyns he hedis outstrak:
 A foule meill thar gane he mak.
 For meill, and malt, and blud, and wyne,

Ran all to gidder in a melleyne,
 That was waseimly for to se.
 Tharfor the men off that countré
 For swa fele thar melleyt wer,
 Callit it the 'Dowglas Lardner.'
 Syne tuk he salt, as Ic hard tell,
 And ded herse, and sordid the well;
 And brynt all, owtakyn stane;
 And is forth, with his menyge, gayne
 Till his resett; for him thought weill,
 Giff he had haldyn the castell,
 It had bene assegyt raith;
 And that him thought to mekill waith.
 For he ne had hop off reskewyng.
 And it is to peralous thing
 In castell assegyt to be,
 Quhar want is off thir thingis thre—
 Victail, or men with thair armyng,
 Or than gud hop off reskewyng.
 And for he dred thir thingis suld faille,
 He chesyt furthwart to trawail,
 Quhar he mycht at his larges be;
 And swa dryve furth his destane.

On this wise was the castell tan,
 And slayne that war tharin ilkan.
 The Dowglas syne all his menyge
 Gert in ser placis depertyt be;
 For men suld wyt quhar thai war,
 That yeld depertyt her and thar.
 Thaim that war woundyt gert he ly
 In till hiddillis, all priuely;
 And gert gud leechis till thaim bring
 Quhill that thai war in till heling.
 And him self, with a few menyge,
 Quhile ane, quhile twa, and quhil thre,
 And wmqhull all him allane,
 In hiddillis throw the land is gane.
 Sa dred he Inglis men his mycht,
 That he durst nocht wele cum in sycht.
 For thai war that tyme all weldand
 As maist lordis, our all the land.

Bot tythandis, that scalis sone,
 Off this deid that Dowglas has done
 Come to the Clifford his ere, in hy,
 That for his tynsall was sary;
 And menynt his men that thai had slayne,
 And syne has to purpos tane,
 To big the castell wp agayne.
 Thar for, as man of mekill mayne,
 He assemblit gret cumpany,
 And till Dowglas he went in hy.
 And biggyt wp the castell swyth;
 And maid it rycht stalwart and styth
 And put tharin wictallis and men.
 Ane off the Thyrrwallis then
 He left behind him capitane,
 And syne till ingland went agayne.

Book IV. 255-462.

For yet than James of Dowglas
 In Dowglas Dailie trawailand was;
 Or ellys weill ner hand tharby,
 In hyddillys sumdeill priuely.
 For he wald se his gouernyng
 That had the castell in keping;
 And gert mak mony juperty,

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To se quhethyr he wald ische blythly.
And quhen he persawyt that he
Wald blythly ische with his menye,
He maid a gadring priuely
Off thaim that war on his party;
That war sa fele, that thai durst fycht
With Thyrrwall, and all the mycht
Off thaim that in the castell war.
He schupe him in the nycht to far
To Sandylandis; and thar ner by
He him enbuschyt priuely,
And send a few a trane to ma;
That sone in the mornung gan ga,
And tuk catell, that wes the castell by,
And syne withdrew thaim hastily
Toward thaim that enbuschit war.
Than Thyrrwall, for owtyn mar,
Gert arme his men, forowtyn baid;
And ischynt with all the men he haid;
And folowynt fast eftir the cry.
He wes armyt at poynt clenly,
Owtane [that] his hede wes bar.
Than, with the men that with him war,
The catell folowit he gud speid,
Rycht as a man that had na dreid,

Till that he gat off thaim a sycht.
Than prekyt thai with all thar mycht,
Folowand thaim owt off aray;
And thai sped thaim fieand, quhill thai
Fer by thair buschement war past:
And Thyrrwall ay chassynt fast.
And than thai that enbuschyt war
Ischynt till him, bath les and mar,
And raysst sudanly the cry.
And thai that saw sa sudandly
That folk come egryly prikand
Rycht betuix thaim and thair warand,
Thai war in to full gret effray.
And, for thai war owt off aray,
Sum off thaim fled, and sum abad.
And Dowglas, that thar with him had
A gret mengye, full egrely
Assaylyt, and scalyt thaim hastily:
And in schort tyme ourraid thaim swa,
That weile nane eschapyt thaim fra.
Thyrrwall, that wes thair capitane,
Wes thar in the bargane slane,
And off his men the mast party.
The lave fled full effraytly.

Book V. 7-62.

NOTES TO THE SURGEON'S DAUGHTER, ETC.

NOTE 1. — AN ANACHRONISM, p. 126

It is scarce necessary to say, that such things could only be acted in the earlier period of our Indian settlements, when the check of the Directors was imperfect, and that of the crown did not exist. My friend Mr. Fair-
scribe is of opinion that there is an anachronism in the introduction of Paupiah, the Bramin *dubash* of the English governor. — C. C.

NOTE 2. — THE DOWRAH, p. 130

In every village the *dowrah*, or guide, is an official person, upon the public establishment, and receives a portion of the harvest or other revenue, along with the smith, the sweeper, and the barber. As he gets nothing from the travellers whom it is his office to conduct, he never scruples to shorten his own journey and prolong theirs by taking them to the nearest village, without reference to the most direct line of route, and sometimes deserts them entirely. If the regular dowrah is sick or absent, no wealth can procure a substitute.

NOTE 3. — CASTLE OF DOUGLAS, p. 159

[The following notice of Douglas Castle, etc., is from the *Description of the Sheriffdom of Lanark*, by William Hamilton of Wishaw, written in the beginning of the 18th century, and printed by the Maitland Club of Glasgow in 1831: —

Douglass parish, and baronie and lordship, heth very long appertained to the family of Douglass, and continued with the Earles of Douglass untill their fatal forfeiture, anno 1455; during which tyme there are many noble and important actions recorded in histories performed by them, by the lords and earls of that great family. It was thereafter given to Douglass Earle of Anguse, and continued with them untill William Earle of Anguse was created Marquess of Douglass, anno 1633; and is now the principal seat of the Marquess of Douglass his family. It is a large baronie and parish, and ane laick patronage, and the Marquess is both titular and patron. He heth there, near the church, a very considerable great house, called the Castle of Douglass; and near the church is a fyne village, called the town of Douglass, long since erected in a burgh of baronie. It heth ane handsome church, with many ancient monuments and inscriptions on the old interments of the earles of this place.

The water of Douglass runs quyte through the whole length of this parish, and upon either side of the water it is called Douglas Dale. It toucheth Clyde towards the north, and is bounded by Lesmahagow to the west, Kyle to the south-west, Crawford John and Carmichael to the south and south-east. It is a pleasant strath, plentifull in grass and corne, and coal; and the minister is well provyded.

The lands of Heyleside, belonging to Samuel Douglass, has a good house and pleasant seat, close by a wood, etc. — F. 65.]

374 NOTES TO SURGEON'S DAUGHTER, ETC.

NOTE 4. — HAZELSIDE, p. 180

[Hazelside Place, the fief granted to Thomas Dickson by William the Hardy, seventh Lord Douglas, is still pointed out about two miles to the south-west of the Castle Dangerous. Dickson was sixty years of age at the time when Lord James first appeared in Douglas Dale. His heirs kept possession of the fief for centuries; and some respectable gentlemen's families in Lanarkshire still trace themselves to this ancestor. — *From Notes by Mr. Haddow.*]

NOTE 5. — MAKER OR TROUVEUR, p. 190

The name of maker stands for poet (with the original sense of which word it exactly corresponds) in the old Scottish language. That of *trouveur* or troubadour — finder, in short — has a similar meaning, and almost in every country the poetical tribes have been graced with the same epithets, inferring the property of those who employ invention or creation.

NOTE 6. — WILD CATTLE, p. 216

These bulls are thus described by Hector Boetius, concerning which he says: —

In this wood (namely the Caledonian wood) were sometime white bulls, with crisp and curling manes, like fierce lions; and though they seemed meek and tame in the remanent figure of their bodies, they were more wild than any other beasts, and had such hatred against the society and company of men, that they never came in the woods nor leasuries where they found any foot or hand thereof, and many days after they eat not of the herbs that were touched or handled by man. These bulls were so wild, that they were never taken but slight and crafty labour, and so impatient, that after they were taken they died from insupportable colour. As soon as any man invaded these bulls, they rushed with such terrible press upon him that they struck him to the earth, taking no fear of hounds, sharp lances, or other most penetrative weapons. — Boetius, *Chron. Scot.*, vol. i. p. xxxix.

The wild cattle of this breed, which are now only known in one manor in England, that of Chillingham Castle in Northumberland (the seat of the Earl of Tankerville), were, in the memory of man, still preserved in three places in Scotland, namely, Drumlanrig, Cumbernauld, and the upper park at Hamilton Palace, at all of which places, except the last, I believe, they have now been destroyed, on account of their ferocity. But though those of modern days are remarkable for their white colour, with black muzzles, and exhibiting, in a small degree, the black mane, about three or four inches long, by which the bulls in particular are distinguished, they do not by any means come near the terrific description given us by the ancient authors, which has made some naturalists think that these animals should probably be referred to a different species, though possessing the same general habits, and included in the same genus. The bones which are often discovered in Scottish mosses belong certainly to a race of animals much larger than those of Chillingham, which seldom grow to above 80 stone (of 14lbs.), the general weight varying from 60 to 80 stone. We should be accounted very negligent by one class of readers did we not record that the beef furnished by those cattle is of excellent flavour, and finely marbled.

[The following is an extract from a letter received by Sir Walter Scott some time after the publication of the novel: —

When it is wished to kill any of the cattle at Chillingham, the keeper goes into the herd on horseback, in which way they are quite accessible, and singling out his victim, takes aim, with a large rifle-gun, and seldom fails in bringing him down. If the poor animal makes much bellowing in his agony, and especially if the ground be stained

NOTES TO SURGEON'S DAUGHTER, ETC. 375

with his blood, his companions become very furious, and are themselves, I believe, accessory to his death. After which, they fly off to a distant part of the park, and he is drawn away on a sledge. Lord Tankerville is very tenacious of these singular animals; he will on no account part with a living one, and hardly allows of a sufficient number being killed to leave pasturage for those that remain.

It happened on one occasion, three or four years ago, that a party visiting at the castle, among whom were some *men of war*, who had hunted buffaloes in foreign parts, obtained permission to do the keeper's work and shoot one of the wild cattle. They sallied out on horseback, and, duly equipped for the enterprise, attacked their object. The poor animal received several wounds, but none of them proving fatal, he retired before his pursuers, roaring with pain and rage, till, planting himself against a wall or tree, he stood at bay, offering a front of defiance. In this position the youthful heir of the castle, Lord Ossulston, rode up to give him the fatal shot. Though warned of the danger of approaching near to the enraged animal, and especially of firing without first having turned his horse's head in a direction to be ready for flight, he discharged his piece; but ere he could turn his horse round to make his retreat, the raging beast had plunged his immense horns into its flank. The horse staggered and was near falling, but recovering by a violent effort, he extricated himself from his infuriated pursuer, making off with all the speed his wasting strength supplied, his entrails meanwhile dragging on the ground; till at length he fell, and died at the same moment. The animal was now close upon his rear, and the young lord would unquestionably have shared the fate of his unhappy steed, had not the keeper, deeming it full time to conclude the day's diversion, fired at the instant. His shot brought the beast to the ground, and running in with his large knife, he put a period to its existence.

This scene of gentlemanly pastime was viewed from a turret of the castle by Lady Tankerville and her female visitors. Such a situation for the mother of the young hero was anything but enviable.]

NOTE 7.—RUIN OF DOUGLAS CHURCH, p. 260

[This is a most graphic and accurate description of the present state of the ruin. Its being occupied by the sexton as a dwelling-place, and the whole scene of the old man's interview with De Valence, may be classed with our illustrious author's most felicitous imaginings.—*Note by the Rev. Mr. Stewart of Douglas.*]

NOTE 8.—FRAGMENT BY COLERIDGE, p. 262

[The Author has somewhat altered part of a beautiful unpublished fragment of Coleridge:—

Where is the grave of Sir Arthur Orellan, —
Where may the grave of that good knight be?
By the marge of a brook, on the slope of Helvellyn,
Under the boughs of a young birch-tree.
The oak that in summer was pleasant to hear,
That rustled in autumn all withered and sear,
That whistled and groaned thro' the winter alone —
He hath gone, and a birch in his place is grown.

The knight's bones are dust,
His good sword is rust;
His spirit is with the saints, we trust. —*Edit.*]

NOTE 9.—PRISON CAGES, p. 312

The queen of Robert the Bruce, and the Countess of Buchan, by whom, as one of Macduff's descent, he was crowned at Scone, were secured in the manner described.

NOTE 10.—BLOODY SYKES, p. 328

The ominous name of Bloodmire Sink or Syke marks a narrow hollow to the north-west of Douglas Castle, from which it is distant about the third

of a mile. Mr. Haddow states that, according to local tradition, the name was given in consequence of Sir James Douglas having at this spot intercepted and slain part of the garrison of the castle while De Walton was in command.

NOTE 11. — DEATH OF YOUNG DICKSON, p. 355

[The fall of this brave stripling by the hand of the English governor, and the stern heroism of the father in turning from the spot where he lay, 'a model of beauty and strength,' that he might not be withdrawn from the duty which Douglas had assigned him of protecting the Lady of Berkely, excites an interest for both, with which it is almost to be regretted that history interferes. It was the old man, Thomas Dickson, not his son, who fell. The slogan, 'a Douglas—a Douglas,' having been prematurely raised, Dickson, who was within the church, thinking that his young lord with his armed band was at hand, drew his sword, and, with only one man to assist him, opposed the English, who now rushed to the door. Cut across the middle by an English sword, he still continued his opposition, till he fell lifeless at the threshold. Such is the tradition, and it is supported by a memorial of some authority—a tombstone, still to be seen in the churchyard of Douglas, on which is sculptured a figure of Dickson, supporting with his left arm his protruding entrails, and raising his sword with the other in the attitude of combat.—*Note by the Rev. Mr. Stewart of Douglas.*]

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GLOSSARY

OF

WORDS, PHRASES, AND ALLUSIONS

- ABAD, waited, delayed
 ABRAHAM, SHAMMING, feigning sickness
 ABUNE, above
 ACCOLADE, the touch of the sword on the shoulder in conferring knighthood
 AE, one
 AIGUES-MORTES, about 20 miles south of Nîmes in France
 AIN, own
 AJAX TELAMON. *See* Teucer
 ALCALDE, a Spanish magistrate or judge
 ALLAH ACKBAR, God is great
 ALL ANERLY, or ALLENARLY, solely
 ALNONE, as soon
 ALTISIDORA. *See* Don Quixote, Part II. chap. xlv.
 AMBUSCADO, an ambush
 ANNON SIS RICARDUS, etc. (p. 69). Are you not a certain Richard Middlemas of the town of Middlemas?
 Answer in Latin
 ANODYNE, an opiate, narcotic
 ANTIGUA, ruin, named from the West India island which produces it
 ASSEGYT, besieged
 A'THESITHER, all together
 ATTRICK, or ITTRICK, FOREST, nearly the same as Selkirkshire
 AULD, old
 AYAH, a black female nurse, generally a native of India
 BACK-PLAY, game in reserve, resource
 BAHAUDER, an epithet of respect, equivalent to 'gallant officer' or so
 BAID, or BADZ, delay
 BANKA, a courtier
 BANYs, bones
 BAR, bare, threadbare
 BARON-BAILIE, baron's deputy in a burgh of barony, a kind of Scottish magistrate
 BASILISK, a fabulous serpent-like creature that inhabited the deserts of Arabia; its glance was held to be fatal to living creatures
 BAULDER, bolder
 BEAUX YEUX DE MACASSETTE, a sly allusion to the proverb *épouser une femme pour les beaux yeux de sa cassette* = to marry a woman for (the beautiful eyes of) her money
 BEDRAL, a sexton, beadle
 BEGUM, a lady of high rank
 BEHOWYT, behoved
 BELIVE, by and by, soon
 BENEDICT, or BENEDICK, a character in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act II. sc. 3
 BENT, TA'EN THE, taken to the open field, provided for one's safety
 BIG, to build; BIGGYT, built
 BISMILLAH, in the name of God!
 BLACK DEATH, visited England in 1348-49, 1361-62, and 1369
 BLATE, civil, bashful
 BLINK, glance
 BOADICEA, a warlike queen of the ancient Britons
 BONNY DIE, or DYE, a pretty toy
 BORREL, simple, unlearned
 BOUNE, ready, prepared
 BOURG, borough, town
 BROWN-BELL, a kind of halberd, painted brown, and carried by foot-soldiers and town-watchmen
 BROWST, a brewing
 BEUSTEN, burst
 BRYNT, burnt
 BUCKLE (of wig), the curl or arrangement that has gone a long time without being renewed
 BUKSHEE, a general
 BURDYS, boards, tables, which were usually boards supported on movable trestles
 BÜRGER'S *LEONORA*, or *LEONORE*, the German poem which Scott translated and published as his first literary achievement
 BURGH OF BARONIE, or BARONY, a distinctive class of boroughs amongst Scottish towns
 BUT (DAUNGER), without, apart from
 CADGY, sportive, lively
 CANNY, gently, carefully
 CAR, care
 CARA RAZI, probably RIZA, the eighth Imam of the Shiite Mohammedans, whose principal shrine is at Meshed in Persia
 CARIOUNE, corpse
 CARLE, a fellow, person
 CARLINE, an old woman
 CARPE DIEM, make the most of the present day
 CARSE, of Gowrie, the low

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alluvial lands on the north side of the Tay in Perthshire
CAST UP TO, to reproach
CELA N'EST PAS HONNÊTE, that is not proper
CELTUS, a Roman physician of the 1st century A. D.
CHABOTRA, a platform
CHABOUK, a long whip
CHESYT, chose, preferred
CHIELD, a fellow, person
CHONDAR, an usher, mace-bearer
CHOWRY, a flap or fan made of a cow's tail
CHRUCKIE-STANES, pebbles, sandstones
CLAITHS, cloths
CLAYES, chatter, tattling
CLEEK TO, to seize upon
CLERLY, wholly, entirely
CLOCKING-HEW, a hen sitting on eggs
CLOSE, bout, turn, struggle
COMYRN, RED, a Scottish chief stabbed by Robert Bruce in the Minorites' church in Dumfries on 10th February 1306
CONABELL, possible, attainable
CONWYNE, condition, state
COSS, a measure of distance varying from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles
COUR DE SOLER, a sunstroke
COUSING, a blood-relation
COWRIES, small shells used as money in India, 6000 or 7000 being worth a rupee = 2s.
CREEZE, or KRIS, a short knife or sword, worn in the East
CRESSET, a fixed candlestick, or small portable fire
CRIMPING, kidnapping men for the army or navy
CRORE, the sum of ten million rupees, worth £1,000,000
CROSS, RUDDY, the red cross of St. George of England
CUK, cook
CULL IN THE KEN, a man or boy in the house
CUMMERBAND, a sash
CUTTAWAR, or KATHIAWAR, a peninsula on the west side of India, north of Bombay, formerly famous for its breed of horses
DAFFING, free conversation, frolicking
DAIS, a canopy; the chief table, somewhat higher than the others

DANG, laid on, struck
DEAD-THRAW, death-throes, death-agony
DEAND, dying
DEBOWALT, disembowelled
DEGLAL, or DEJAL, the anti-christ or false prophet of the Mohammedans, who will come riding on an ass in mockery of Jesus
DERLA, an ancient Saxon kingdom of England, between the Tees, the Humber, and the borders of Wales
DERERTYT, divided, separated
DEWAN, a treasurer
DRYSTYL, devised
DRYAN, the state council of an Oriental sovereign
DUCTUS UTRUSQUE JURIS, learned in both civil and ecclesiastical law; that is, fully qualified to practise
DOMINICA CONFITENTHUM, the Sunday of confessing persons
DOMUM SERVAVIT, LANAM FECTY, she stayed at home and spun wool
DORMANT (TABLE), a fixed, stationary table, as distinguished from one made of boards laid on trestles, which was the usual fashion in the middle ages
DOUR, stubborn, obstinate
DOWTAN, the official guide of a Hindoo village
DREID, dread, fear
DREID, GELD, a gratuity, tip
DRUMMER'S HANDWRITING, marks of the lash, made by the drummer as the regimental executioner
DURSK, a steward
DURELAND, fighting
DYLE, grief
DUNCAN, KING, HIS BODY-GUARD. See *Macbeth*, Act i. sc. 7, and Act ii. sc. 2
DURBAR, an official reception
EEN, eyes
EFFRAY, fear, terror; EFFRAYTLY, under the influence of fear
EREXLY, or ERELY, eagerly
ELDER COMEDY, amongst the ancient Greeks, the actors nearly always wore masks; their Elder Comedy was of a decidedly satirical character
ELDOUN, or ELDON, HILLS, near Melrose, Roxburghshire, traditionally associated with Thomas the

Rhymer and Michael Scott, the magician
EMBUSCHTY, or EMBUSCHT, ambushed
ENSENYE, standard, ensign
ENDYTT, buried
ERE, ear
ESCHAT, escape
ETRICK, forest of, where is now the county of Selkirk
EYSS, to desire
EYT, eat, ate
FA, foe, enemy
FAIROUR, a traitor
FAKIR, a Hindoo, in the text a Mohammedan, religious enthusiast
FALKIRK, BATTLE OF, was fought on 22d July 1298
FANFARONADE, vain boasting, swaggering
FAR, fore, go
FASHES, takes trouble, pains
FATA MORGANA, a fairy, sister of King Arthur, figures in the chivalric epics of Boiardo and Tasso
FAUSE-FACE, a false face, mask
FEEL, much, many things
FELZ, far, a long way
FERNOIS, Franks; that is, Europeans of all nations;
FERING SAHR, a European gentleman
FEU DE SOIZ, a discharge of firearms, salute
FIZLAND, flying
FLOCK-SILK, floss-silk
FLORENTINE (VEAL), a pie
FLYTING, scolding
FOROWTYN, besides
FORTY-FIVE, the attempt of the Young Pretender, Prince Charles Edward, to gain the crown of England in 1745
FRANGISTAN, Europe
FREISCHUTZ, or FREISCHÜTZ, an opera by Carl Maria von Weber, completed in 1820
FURTHWART, prudence, precaution
FYCHT, fight
FYKE, trouble, pains, worry
GADRING, gathering
GALLOODEN, ornamented with galloon, a kind of thread lace used for binding
GAN, began
GART. See *Ger*, etc.
GAVESTON, PIERS DE, a Gascon, an unworthy favourite of Edward II.
GAY SCIENCE, minstrelsy

- GEAR**, business, affair
GER, or GAR, to make, cause;
GART, GERT, or GARRIED,
 made, caused
GHAUTS, mountain chains on
 both sides of the country
 of Mysore in Southern
 India
GIAMSHID, or JAMSHID, a
 legendary king of Persia.
See The Talisman, Note 3,
 p. 416
GIE, to give
GIERING AND GABBLING, grin-
 ning and talking
GIEB, a kite
GLOWERING, staring
GOLCONDA, a town and king-
 dom in the interior of
 India, where diamonds
 were formerly cut and
 polished; hence the place
 was proverbial for its
 wealth
GOOD-DAUGHTER, daughter-
 in-law
GOTH, one deficient in taste,
 an uncultivated person
GOWFING, playing golf
GRAITH, dressed, prepared
GRUYNE, an old name for
 Corunna, in Spain
GUIDE, to treat, use, direct
GUINEA-PIGS (p. 112), guinea-
 men, men possessing
 guineas
GYFF, if

HAGGARD, a wild hawk which
 has been tamed
HAGGIS, sheep's liver, heart,
 etc., minced fine and boiled
 in a bag with oatmeal,
 suet, etc.
HAIFF, to have, wear
HAKIM, a physician
HALDYN, held
HALLOWMASS, All Saints Day,
 the 1st of November
HANK, a hold, advantage
HEDS, heads, ends
HERIOT ROW, a street of
 Edinburgh, running paral-
 lel to, and north of, Princes
 Street (*q.v.*), was laid out
 in 1767 and following years
HIDDILLIS, or HYDDILIS,
 hiding
HIE, high, principal (street)
HIPPOCRATES, an ancient
 Greek physician, whose
 authority was long of
 great weight in medical
 practice; he wrote a book
 of *Aphorisms*
Hogg, a shilling, perhaps
 sixpence
HOLM, a flat plain beside a
 river

HOOKAH, the tobacco-pipe
 of Oriental races, consists
 of a bowl for holding the
 tobacco, and a bottle for
 holding water, through
 which the smoke passes in
 an indiarubber tube
HORNING AND HOOPING, blow-
 ing of horns and shouting
 (whooping), as by the Wild
 Huntsman in the opera
HOURL, a beautiful maiden
 in the Mohammedan
 paradise
HOWDAH, provided with a
 howdah, or enclosed seat
 for persons to ride in
HY, haste

IC, I
ILKANE, each one
ISNER HOUSE, one of the
 branches of the principal
 law court of Scotland
ISNOUTH, within
ISCHYT, issued, came out;
ISCHE, to come out, forth

JALOUSING, suspecting,
 opining
JED, FOREST OF, or JEDWARD
 FOREST, near Jedburgh, in
 the south of Scotland;
JEDWOOD, or JEDDAET,
 STAFF, a kind of battle-
 axe, made originally at
 Jedburgh
JIGGER-DUBBER, a door-
 shutter, porter
JOANNA, MY FRIEND (p. xii),
 the dramatist Joanna
 Baillie (1762-1851)
JOKE AND LET THE JAW GAE
 BY, stoop, *i.e.* give way,
 and let the wave go by,
 bend to the storm
JUPERTY, a dangerous, war-
 like enterprise

KAFFILA, a caravan of mer-
 chants
KAFIR, an infidel, from the
 standpoint of a Moham-
 medan
KAIL, cabbage; **KAIL-YARD**,
 cabbage-plot
KEN, to know
KERNE, a light-armed foot-
 soldier
KHAN, an Oriental inn
KHELAUT, a dress of honour
KILLEDAR, the governor of
 a fort
KRI, the small violin that
 dancing-masters formerly
 used
KITE, SERGEANT, a character
 in George Farquhar's
Recruiting-Officer (1706)

LAC, the sum of 100,000
 rupees, worth £10,000
LAICK, lay
LALLY, COUNTY, an officer of
 Irish extraction, com-
 manded the French forces
 in India in 1758-61
LAND, a block of houses,
 house
LANDLOUTER, stroller, ad-
 venturer
LANDWARD, the outlying
 rural districts
LARGES, liberty
LAVE, remainder
LAYSER, leisure
LEADENHALL STREET, Lon-
 don, where the East India
 Company had their principal
 offices
LESTURES, pastures
LEVETT, a sort of medical
 practitioner whom Dr.
 Johnson sheltered in his
 own house for twenty
 years
LEVYT, remained
LEVILL, LELE, or LEAL, loyal,
 faithful
LINTOT, BARNABY BERNARD
 (1675-1736), publisher of
 works by Pope, Steele,
 Gay, and others
LIPFEN, to trust, confide in
LISHED, liked, chose
LOESCOUSE, a hash of stewed
 biscuit and salt meat
LONG-SHANKS, a nickname of
 Edward I. of England
LOON, fellow
LOOTIE, a marauder,
 plunderer
LOS, praise
LOUPING, leaping
LUCINA, the goddess of
 birth amongst the ancient
 Romans
LUCKY, dame, a title given to
 old women
LXAND, lying

MA, or MAR, more; MA, to
 make
MACDONALD, FLORA, the
 guide of Prince Charles
 Edward in June 1746, was
 imprisoned for a time, but
 eventually set at liberty
MACHIAVEL, statesman of
 Florence, 16th century,
 famous for craft and un-
 scrupulous duplicity
MAHATTAS, the mixed races
 inhabiting a group of states
 on the west side of India
MAINRENT, or MAYRENT,
 vassalage, homage to a
 superior
MAIR, more

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MAIS C'EST ÉGAL, but it's all the same
MALLEUS SCOTORUM, the hammer of the Scots
MAUD, a Lowland plaid
MAYNE, valour, might
MEILL, or MEILE, meal, flour
MEKILL, or MUCKLE, much, great
MELLÉ, medley, confused mess; MELYNE, confusion, mixture; MELYT, mingled together
MENYE, or MENGYE, a feudal lord's retainers
METHUEN, or METHYEN, Wood, a few miles west of Perth, where Bruce was defeated on 19th June 1306
MOBLE, moveable goods
MOHUR, a British Indian gold coin = 30s.
MOLDWARP, a mole
MOOTEE MAHUL, pearl of the palace, a term of endearment
MORT-SKIN, the skin of a lamb or sheep that has died accidentally
MOTAKUL, a meeting
MOULLAH, a Mohammedan priest
MUZZIN, the officer of a Mohammedan mosque who announces the hours of prayer from a lofty tower
MUL, moor, common
MURNYN, mourning
MUSCADEL, or MUSCATEL, a sweet, strong wine of Italy and France
MUSNUP, a state cushion
MYCHT, might (verb and substantive)
NA SLATE, uncivil, immodest, bold
NAGGRA, a state drum
NAKYN WYSS, no manner of wise, nowise
NATCH, or NAUTCH, a spectacle by professional dancers in India
NISI DOMINUS CUSTODIET, unless the Lord keep (the house)
NIZAM, the title of the ruler of the state of Hyderabad in the centre of India
NOCHT, not
NOURJEHAN, light of the world, a term of endearment
NOUSHIRVAN, KHOSRAU, or CHOSROES, surnamed Anosharvan, i.e. the Blessed, a great king of ancient Persia, famed for his justice

NOUZ, for NOUS, intelligence and enterprise
NOVUM CASTRUM, Roman name of Newcastle-on-Tyne
NULLAH, a small brook, torrent
NUZZAR, a tribute of gold mohurs
NYCHT, night
NYM, CORPORAL, a character in Shakespeare's *Henry V.*
OE, a grandchild
OFTSYSS, ofttimes, often
ORIFLAMME, the sacred banner of France, edged with flame-like trimming and borne on a gilded staff
OUTSTRAK, struck out
OWLIAH, or WALI, a Mohammedan saint
OWT, out
OWTYN, OWTANE, or OWTAKYN, outta'en, outtaken, except
PAGODA (p. 102), gold coin, with a pagoda figured on one side = 7s.
PARK, MUNGO, practised as a surgeon at Peebles from 1739 to 1805
PAXARETE, a kind of sherry, grown near to Xeres in the south of Spain
PEON, a foot-soldier
PERRAY, verily, truly
PERSAVING, perceiving, perception; PERSAVYT, perceived
PETTAH, the town or suburb outside a fortified place
PICARESCA, what is knavish, adventurous, and not over honest
PROKANINIES, small children
PINDAREES, freebooters or mercenary soldiers who established themselves in the Central Provinces of India after the overthrow of the Mogul empire
PINT (SCOTTISH) = 3 pints English
PONDIOCHERRY, was surrendered, after a long resistance, to the English by Count Lally in 1761
PREKYT, pricked, hastened; PRIKAND, pricking, hurrying
PRESTANTIN, or PRESTANTYN, one who receives military pay (*prestantia*)
PRINCES STREET, the principal street of Edinburgh, laid out in 1787 and following years
PRIVELY, privily, secretly

PRO TANTO, so far as this matter is concerned
PUGG, or PUG, a mischievous little goblin in Ben Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass*
QUANTUM SUFFICIT, the needful amount or quantity
QUEAN, a woman, female
QUESTION, torture
QUHAR, where
QUHEN, when
QUHETHIR, or QUHETHYR, however, notwithstanding
QUHEYT, wheat
QUHLE, now, again
QUHILL, till, until
QUOS EGO OF NEPTUNE (p. 5). See Virgil's *Æneid*, Bk. i. 139
RACHRIN, or RATHLIN, an island off the north coast of Ireland
RAITH, quickly, soon
RAJAHPOOT, a noble of India
RAMBLER, Dr. Samuel Johnson, who edited the periodical called *The Rambler*
RAP, a counterfeit coin, current in Ireland in the reign of George I., and worth half a farthing, though it passed for a halfpenny
RAPLOCH, coarse woollen, homespun
RATTAN, a species of cane
RAYSSYT, raised
REBECK, a stringed instrument, not unlike a violin in appearance
RECREAT, the huntsman's signal of recall
REDESDALE, the valley of the river Reed in Northumberland
REIF, robbery, plunder
RESEYT, abode, residence
RICHARD, NOT I' THE VEIN (p. 30), an allusion to Shakespeare's *Richard III.*, Act iv. sc. 2
ROKELAY, a woman's short cloak
ROSE NOBLE, an old English gold coin = 6s. 8d.; so called because a rose was shown on one side of the coin after Edward IV.'s reign
ROTE, a kind of harp or guitar, played by turning a handle
RUBERSLAW, a hill in Roxburghshire, 1400 feet high
RUDDY CROSS. See Cross, ruddy

RUGS AND RIVES, tears and carries off by violence
RUSTAN, or **RUSTEM**, an ancient legendary prince of Persia
RYSS, arise

SACK, a kind of dry wine
SAHIB ANGREGIE, an English gentleman
S. T. GILES'S, the district about Seven Dials, London
SALAM, a greeting, salutation; **SALAM ALAIKUM**, peace be with you; **SALAM ALAIKUM BEMA SEBARTEM**, peace abide with you, for that ye have endured patiently—from the Koran, sura xiii. verse 24
SALETH, or **SALIH**, a prophet who, in the Koran, attests his divine mission by causing a she-camel to come out of a solid rock

SAMYN, same
SASINE, investiture, the legal document which testifies that so and so has been put in lawful possession of certain property

SCALIS, spread abroad;
SCALYT, scattered, separated

SCHER, to shear, divide
SCHILLER, the German poet, whose prose play of *Die Räuber*, i.e. *The Robbers* (1782), is alluded to on p. xvi

SCHUPE, directed his course, went
SCREEDS, shreads, pieces torn off

SCUNNER, GIZ A, to make a gesture of loathing or disgust

SEA-PIE, beef boiled in a coating of paste, in a large stoneware dish

SEMIAMIS, a mythical empress of Assyria, and wife of the founder of Nineveh

SEL, several
SESYT, seized

SEYD, HALL OF, an allusion to the popular Arab romance of Abu-Zeyd. See Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, end of chap. xxi.

SHAW, wild wood, forest
SHIELING, a hut

SOLTO DHU GLASS, see you dark grey man

SIGNALLED, indicated, described

SIPAHEE, or **SEPOY**, a native foot-soldier in India

SIRDAR, captain, officer

SIR TRISTREM, was a mighty hunter in his day

SKIRLS, screams
SLIGHT, or **SLYCHT**, craft, guile

SLOGAN, a war-cry
SONE, soon

SORDID, defiled
SOUPLE, supple, active

SOUTHDEAN, FOREST OF, near Jedburgh, in the south of Scotland

SOWAR, a native cavalry-man in Indian armies

SOWARREE, a grand procession

SPEK, speech, discourse, agreement

SPEE, to close, shut

SPERYT, inquired, inquired into

SPRINGALD, a youth, active young man

STOUT, a hagon, a vessel for holding ale, etc.

STRATHCLYDE, KINGDOM OF, stretched from the Clyde to the Solway, and existed during the 8th to 11th centuries

STRATH-DEVON, the valley of the Devon, a river which joins the Forth a few miles from Alloa

STYTH, strong

SUMDELL, **SUMDEILL**, or **SOMEDEAL**, somewhat, in some degree

SUM ILLE MISERRIMUS, I am that unhappy one

SWA, so; **SWAGATE**, in such way, manner

SWIVEL, a small cannon fixed on a swivel

SWYTH, quickly

SYCHT, sight

SYLLABUB, or **SILLIEUB**, a dish of wine, etc., with milk or cream, sugar, etc., a sort of curd

TA, to take

TABLE DORMANT. See *Dormant* (table)

TAN, ta'en, taken

TANTIVY, an outbreak of violence

TAPPICED, or **TAPPISHED**, concealed, hidden

TARTARIAN FELT, dressed and prepared by Tartars or in the lands they range over

TATOO, a small horse of Southern India

TACRIDOR, a bull-fighter

TELINGA, a native soldier in the East India Company's Service

TRUCER, half-brother of Ajax

Telamon. See *Homer's Iliad*, Bk. viii. 266-272

THANE, originally one in rank between a noble and a franklin; here (p. 37) one of the country gentry

'THINGS MUST BE AS THEY MAY' (p. 152), from *Henry V.*, Act ii. sc. 1

THIRLAGE, the obligation of a tenant to get his corn ground at a particular mill

THOCHT, or **THOUGHT**, thought

THREEF, to persist

THROWCH, or **THROW**, through

TINCHEL, a great drive of game, made by a wide ring of beaters

TINEING, losing; **TINT**, lost

TIPPOO, son and successor of Hyder Ali as ruler of Mysore

TITULAR, a layman who had the disposition of church lands after the Reformation

TOPE, a knoll, slight eminence

TOWNHEAD to **THE TOWNFIT**, from the head to the foot (one end to the other) of the town

TOWNYNS, tuns, liquor-barrels

TOY, a headdress worn by old women of the lower classes

TRANE, train, ambush

TRAVAILLAND, travelling, moving from place to place

TREBIZOND, **SULTAN OF**. A branch of the imperial Byzantine family of the Comneni reigned at Trebizond, on the north coast of Asia Minor, for two hundred and fifty years (till 1461)

TRINKETING, holding secret communication with, intriguing

TROWYT, trowed, trusted, believed

TURNBERRY, the stronghold of the Earl of Carrick, i.e. Robert Bruce, in Ayrshire

TURSSYT, or **TURSYT**, packed up in bales or bundles

TYNSAILL, loss

TITTHANDIS, tidings, news

UMQUHILL, sometimes

UPSIDES WITH, quits with, even with

'UP, TIMOTHY, UP,' etc. (p. 221), from Wordsworth's 'Childless Father,' one of the 'Poems on the Affections'

UTTERANCE ('AT), extremity, outrance

she a
not f
her b
forwa
attit
like
migh
her i
the
'T
prize
strin
Trek
ing,
lady
chiv
lock
bear
hold
for
Dou
'
lock
my
An
of
sha
tan
her
siti
fiel
'T
the
Per
of
Th
the
sto
cor
fre
sho
eit

VAREEL, a government messenger
VAVASOUR, a vassal of intermediate rank
VEIN, I' THE. See Richard, etc.
VELIS ET REMIS, with help of sails and oars, with flowing sail
VISHNOO, one of the principal gods of the Hindoos
WAITH, danger
WALD, would
WAN, won, gained
WAPNYS, weapons

WARAND, place of protection, shelter
WEANS, children
WELDAND, possessing, obtaining
WERRAY, to make war upon
WIAAGE, a military expedition
WIGHT, strong and active
WITTING, knowledge
WONNYT, -reached, gained, won. Compare Wan
WROCHT, worked, laboured, effected
WYSS (WAS), knew
WYT, to avoid, shun

YAITTS, gates, doors
YELD, went
YEIT, yet
YIN, one
YMYDDYS, in the midst of
YOWTHEAD, youth

ZENANA, the harem, i.e. the wives, with their attendants, of an Indian prince or noble
ZENOBIA, queen of Palmyra, in the Syrian desert, towards the end of the 3d century

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SUPPLEMENTARY GLOSSARY, CORRECTIONS, ETC.

WAVERLEY

AGRAMANTE, KING, a character in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*

ALMA. Substitute See Prior's poem, *Alma, or the Progress of the Mind*

BANGOUR, WILLIAM HAMILTON OF, Scottish poet, 1704-1754

BULLEN, WINNING OF, probably for 'bullion,' money, coin

CHESTERFIELD'S *CHARACTERS REVIEWED*, by Thomas Davies, 1777

DENT'S DOG-BILL, imposed taxes of 5s. and 3s. on dogs, was conducted through the House of Commons by Mr. Dent, in 1796

LAISSEZ FAIRE À DON ANTOINE, a proverbial saying expressive of confidence, confident audacity

STURGEON, MAJOR, a character in Foote's farce, *The Mayor of Garret* (1763)

TEN COMMANDMENTS IN THE FACE (p. 198), fingers and thumbs, an allusion to *Henry VI.*, Part II. Act i. sc. 3

'UNTHREAD THE RUDE EYE,' etc. (p. 216). See *King John*, Act v. sc. 4

GUY MANNERING

ABOULFOUARI, the voyager. See H. W. Weber, *Tales of the East*, vol. ii. p. 469

ANAHIBAZON (p. 17). Read ANABIBAZON, ascension

BLACK ACTS, the (fictitious) enactments of necromancy or magic. In English legal phraseology the term is applied to certain Georgian acts against riots, mobs, unlawful assemblies

CANZADE. See H. W. Weber, *Tales of the East*, vol. ii. p. 469

CATABIBAZON (p. 17). Read CATABIBAZON, descension

COCK AND A BOTTLE. Substitute An abbreviation of a phrase in Congreve's *Way of the World*, Act iii. sc. 3

CONSCOWTHART MOSS. See Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*, vol. ii. p. 96

ERICTHOR (p. 330), a Thessalian witch. See Lucan's *Pharsalia*, bk. vi.

HATTERAICK, DIRK. This name occurs in, and was no doubt borrowed from, Sinclair's *Satan's Invisible World Discovered* (reprinted 1871)

LINGTOW MEN, smugglers who carried goods from the coast to the interior, named from the coil of ropes, or 'lingtow,' which they wore at other times as a shoulder belt (Joseph Train, *History of Isle of Man*, vol. ii. p. 317, ed. 1845)

NICHOLAS KNOCKING. St. Nicholas was the patron saint of thieves and highwaymen

PATRICO, the orator, hedge-priest, and patriarch of a gang or company of strollers or gipsies. See Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, Act ii. last sc.

RASPOUSE. Read *The Dutch rasp-huis*, a house of correction, prison

STANESHIEBANK. See Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*, vol. ii. p. 56

WALKER'S, a tavern in Writer's Court, off the High Street, Edinburgh

ANTIQUARY

BASILUS (-VALENTINE). Add A name under which several books on alchemy were published in the 14th to 16th centuries (at Hamburg in 1740)

KELSO CONVOY, a step and a half over the threshold

388 SUPPLEMENTARY GLOSSARY, ETC.

PYMANDER, an allusion to *Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus*; his *Divine Pymander*, translated by Dr. Everard (1650), chap. ii. Pymander is a spirit with whom Hermes Trismegistus holds colloquy

SCHEDBARSCHEMOTH SCHARTACHAN, or **SCHARTATHAN**, the Spirit of the Spirits of the Moon (Francis Barrett, *Magnus, or the Celestial Intelligencer* 1801, pt. ii. p. 146)

ROB ROY

BUTTON'S COFFEE-HOUSE, opposite to Will's, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, was established by Daniel Button, a servant of Addison's wife, and ranked next after Will's for its literary associations

COLLEGE OF ST. OMER'S (p. 412). *Read At St. Omer*, dept. Pas de Calais, France, for educating English and Irish Roman Catholics

BLACK DWARF

DALLOMLEA. Compare Scott's *Lord of the Isles*, canto vi. stanza 23

ELLIOT, MARTIN, OF PREAKIN TOWER. See Scott's *Prose Works*, vol. vii. p. 38: *Provincial Antiquities*

LEGEND OF MONTROSE

RORIES, a general name for Highlanders. One of the three divisions of the descendants of Somerled of the Isles was called Rori or Ruri

HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN

BAWTEE, an old Scottish name for a dog, used in Sir David Lindsay's poems

GRUNWIGGAN, or GROENWEGEN, Simon van der Made, Dutch jurist (1613-52), editor of Grotius

ROBERTLAND, LADY, of the family of Cunningham of Robertland, in the parish of Stewarton, Ayrshire

BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR

BOOTS AND DOUBLET, etc. (p. 200). See Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, Act i. sc. 3

DON GUYFEROS. See *Don Quixote*, Part II. chap. xxvi., etc.

HYKE A TALBOT, etc. (p. 90), borrowed from Dame Juliana Berners

ROAR YOU AS 'T WERE ANY NIGHTINGALE (p. 1). See *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act i. sc. 2

IVANHOE

ESTRADA. *Read ESTRADA*, or *ESTRADO*, the raised part of a room where Spanish ladies sat on cushions to receive visitors

PAREIRA, JOSEPH, ARMOURER OF MILAN. Galeazzo Duke of Milan sent to England in the reign of Richard II. four of the best armourers of Milan, to make armour for Henry Earl of Derby (Henry IV.). See John's *Froissart*, iv. p. 597

SIR BEVIS, of Hampton, hero of a mediæval romance of chivalry

SIR GUY, of Warwick, hero of a mediæval romance of chivalry

ULPHUS, HORN OF, an ancient Danish horn, perpetuating the memory of Ulphus son of Torald, and preserved in York minster

THE MONASTERY

'I PREACH FOR EVER', etc. (p. 262), from Crabbe's *Parish Register*, 'Marriages'

KENILWORTH

SCHARMAJN, or SHAHMAJN, in astrology, a name of the 'first heaven'

FORTUNES OF NIGEL

BULL (THEATRE), perhaps the Red Bull theatre, St. John's Street, London

ERCL'S VEIN, a tyrant's vein. See *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act i. sc. 2

PEVERIL OF THE PEAK

GEORGE AND A STAR (p. 458), the insignia of the Order of the Garter; also an allusion to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham

'I AM AS FREE', etc., from Dryden's *Conquest of Granada*, Act i. sc. 1

LOUGHTAN, or LOAGHTYN, 'brown,' a cloth made of undyed wool, in the Isle of Man

TALISMAN

HUNTINGLEN. *Read Huntingdon*

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